



KENT ON SUNDAY



INSIDE

Education

A pull-out guide to the current state of learning in the county

Review

Comedian Tom Wigglesworth on the joys of matrimony

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FREE

LECTURERS PLAN INDUSTRIAL ACTION – WITH STUDENTS' UNION BACKING

Pensions strike threat to final-year degrees

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

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FEARS are mounting that a planned strike by lecturers at the University of Kent could result in final-year students missing out on their degrees.

And, remarkably, students are backing the action. Scholars based at the university's campuses in Canterbury, Medway and Tonbridge have agreed to support two days of industrial action in a row over pension scheme changes.

Unless a last-minute deal can be brokered, lecturers will strike with University and College Union (UCU) members from 62 other universities aiming to stop a reduction in benefits through the Universities Superannuation Scheme.

The action could result in students' exam papers being withheld or unmarked, leaving them at a severe disadvantage while other graduates snap up the few jobs available.

"This goes against everything we believe in, which is to secure the best possible outcome for our students," said UCU pensions officer Ian Bruce, a lecturer in nanobiotechnology at Kent's School of Biosciences.

"This sounds disingenuous, but we really do want what's best for the people we have taught for the past three or four years. I don't believe in strikes at universities, but the only thing that seems to make a difference in these cases is when our employers realise we have no other option but to cause maximum disruption.

"Unfortunately, we have to target those people who we are hoping to serve best, and that's the students. Today, universities are run like businesses, and we have no other weapon but to

Continued on page two



CRUISE ALONG TO OUR SHOW

For full details see inside

Tippie for the top

A MICROBREWERY will be raising a glass to the royal wedding next month, with its own beer created for the happy couple.

Penshurst-based Moodley's Royal Match is described as an elegant and tasteful beer, which reflects the characteristics of Prince William and bride-to-be Kate Middleton.

Head brewer and owner Yudhistra Moodley said he hopes it will provide the perfect tippie for royal wedding street parties.

STORY - SEE PAGE 3

In a financial hole

COUNTY Hall highways chiefs have admitted it would take a one-off payment of £250m to bring Kent's 5,000 miles of roads up to standard.

But with £95m savings needed overall in the authority's budget for 2011/12 and a 20 per cent drop in the roads' pot, Kent County Council has had to devise resourceful ways to ensure efficient maintenance of our pothole-ridden highways.

STORY - SEE PAGE 5

Raising the curtain

THEATRE chiefs have unveiled the first season at the new Marlowe in Canterbury.

Opening in October with a star-studded gala, the first line-up includes a sneak peak at a show before it starts its run in the West End, and the world premiere of a major new dance performance.

STORY - SEE PAGE 17

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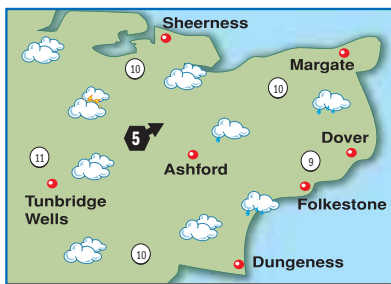
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Kent today



TODAY: Fairly cloudy with the odd spot of drizzle during the morning. Brightening up during the course of the afternoon. Gentle south-easterly winds. Max temp 8-11C (46-52F). **TONIGHT:** Largely dry with clear spells. Mist developing later. Light southerly winds. Min temp 3-6C (37-43F).

Around Britain

		°C	°F			°C	°F
Aberdeen	rain	7	45	London	cloudy	12	54
Belfast	drizzle	8	46	Liverpool	fair	9	48
Birmingham	drizzle	10	50	Manchester	drizzle	9	48
B'mouth	cloudy	11	52	Newcastle	cloudy	10	50
Bristol	fair	9	48	Norwich	cloudy	11	52
Cardiff	fair	10	50	Oxford	cloudy	11	52
Cork	fair	7	45	Southsea	cloudy	10	50
Edinburgh	rain	8	46	S'hampton	cloudy	10	50
Glasgow	rain	7	45	Southport	fair	8	46
Isle of Man	cloudy	8	46	Swansea	cloudy	9	48
Leeds	drizzle	8	46	Torquay	fair	9	48

Sun & moon

Sunrise	6.15am	Sunset	5.56pm	Lighting up times:
Moonrise	10.10am	Moonset	2.20am	5.56pm to 6.13am

High Tides

	today	tomorrow
	ht (m)	ht (m)
Dover	03.31 5.5 16.17 5.3	04.58 5.2 17.55 5.2
Margate	04.42 4.0 17.09 3.9	05.49 3.9 18.42 3.8
St Mary's	09.40 4.3 22.18 4.2	11.13 4.1 -

Week ahead

monday Grey. Drizzly. max 10C min 3C	thursday Showers. max 12C min 4C
tuesday Showers. max 12C min 3C	friday Showers. max 11C min 4C
wednesday Showers. max 10C min 3C	saturday Sunny spells. max 12C min 4C

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Lib Dems 'will regain support in local elections'

FIGHT: Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

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LIB DEM politicians in Kent insist their party's collapse at the Barnsley by-election is no indication of how local people will vote on May 5.

Despite finishing second in the South Yorkshire constituency at last year's General Election, Nick Clegg's group suffered an amazing fall from grace to receive fewer votes than the Tories, UK Independence Party (UKIP), BNP and an independent.

UKIP – which finished second behind Labour in the vote on March 4 – has since announced its intentions to overtake the Lib Dems as the country's 'number three' party.

But according to Folkestone-based Lib Dem activist Peter Carroll and Kent group leader Cllr Trudy Dean, voters taking part in the local elections on May 5 are more likely to judge candidates on their own merits rather than on the performance of the group on a national level.

"I'm not surprised at how badly we did in Barnsley because some of the decisions being taken nationally have been catastrophic for the party," said Mr Carroll, organiser of the ongoing FairFuel campaign and a Shepway district councillor.

"But I don't think the effect will be that devastating in Kent. Most of the county's Lib Dem councillors are elected based on their hard work, local campaigning and desire to serve their communities. That will be resilient, despite the trauma going on.

"These are people who put their heart and soul into their local areas. They fight for crossings and yellow lines and the renovation of parks, and that sort of thing strikes a chord with the voters."

Mr Carroll said the Lib Dems' fall from grace was due to them being associated with less popular Coalition announcements like the trebling of tuition fees.

He said that for the party to reclaim voter support it needed to wrestle some of the good news stories away from the Conservatives, such as the welcome decision to raise the income tax threshold for lower-paid workers.

Cllr Dean, who is one of just seven Lib Dems out of more than 80 councillors on Kent County Council, said: "The by-election defeat was disappointing but not unexpected given that people are going to blame the Coalition for the spending cuts.

Predict

"But whatever happens on a national level, in Kent we will continue to pick candidates based on whether they will do a good job for the community.

"The Lib Dems made a big jump to win a by-election in Shropshire a couple of weeks ago, so it's difficult to predict what will happen in any one area."

UKIP leader and South East MEP Nigel Farage, from Westerham, near Sevenoaks, declared his party the true winner after coming second in Barnsley.

He told KoS: "UKIP will be fighting for 1,000 seats across the country as well as for people to vote 'yes' in the Alternative Vote referendum.

"I am utterly confident we will increase our share of the vote."

Lecturers' strike may hit degrees

Continued from front page

hurt them through the product. It's too late to not set the exam papers now, but we can refuse to mark them so they don't get their degrees."

Despite just 166 UCU members out of 545 responding to a strike ballot at the University of Kent – including 120 in favour – it is believed all could take part in the industrial action.

President of the university's students' union, Helen Wood, said its members had agreed to support the lecturers despite the damage it could cause to their degrees.

"We want to help them because we're fighting for the same thing – education," she said.

"Hopefully it won't get to that stage, but even if the lecturers do go on strike, students' exams will be marked eventually and they will get their degrees."

In order to cut the long-term cost of funding the pension scheme, which has about 130,000 active members, university employers are pressing ahead with controversial changes.

The proposals, to be introduced on April 1, include an end to final-salary pensions for new members, the introduction of a pension age of 65 for all members, and the linking of pension increases to the lower consumer prices index of inflation.

UCU says it will not go ahead with the strikes if employers are prepared to go to conciliation service Acas for further talks.

Professor Keith Mander, deputy vice-chancellor of the University of Kent, said: "The university is working with all its staff to meet these challenges and regrets that a minority see strike action as a productive way forward."

Expert welcomes pension reforms

STATE pension reforms expected to result in flat-rate payments for all have been welcomed by a former government advisor.

Pensions expert Ros Altmann served the previous Labour regime from 2000-2005 and is now director general of the Folkestone-based Saga Group, which provides services for the over-50s. She said that despite her calls for a flat-rate state pension being ignored in the past, she was glad the Coalition had seen sense.

Dr Altmann said: "After years of watching our pension system fall apart, it seems that Work and Pensions Secretary Iain Duncan Smith may finally be getting to grips with the inadequacies of the UK state pension."

Mr Duncan Smith indicated during a speech on Tuesday, March 8, that his department plans to remove top-up payments for low earners who do not save, while ensuring fairness for parents who take time off to raise children.

Meanwhile, pensions minister Steve Webb of the Liberal Democrats, revealed on Wednesday that some high earners will pay more in but get less out than people on lower incomes under the reforms.

• **What do you think of the reforms?**

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'Elegant' ale is ideal with street party fare, says creator

Toast royal couple with wedding brew

By JENNA PUDELEK

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A COMMEMORATIVE beer has been created by a microbrewery to celebrate the royal wedding.

Penshurst-based Moodley's Royal Match is described as an elegant and tasteful beer, which reflects the characteristics of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

The hand-crafted real ale is described as pale in colour with a soft creamy head.

Head brewer and owner Yudhistra Moodley said: "I started off imagining street parties and ideally a warm April day.

"I imagined what beer would go really well if you had an array of salads and pork pies, summery food. I thought it has got to be a fairly pale, light beer, probably quite fragrant, with lots of hops."

The result is made using English and German hops, Admiral and Hallertau Mittelfrau respectively. It has an ABV of 3.2 per cent.

Mr Moodley is hoping it will provide the perfect tipple for street parties held on the bank holiday to celebrate the royal wedding and throughout the summer months.

"I like my beers to appeal to both men and women," he said. "They tend not to be too heavy or too traditional in many ways.

"This has a nice bouquet and smells quite flowery. It tastes quite light with some good hoppy notes."



Mr Moodley's decision to create the beer to mark the royal couple's special day on April 29 has followed a long tradition of commemorative royal brews.

"Historically, royal events have always been marked with commemorative beers," he said.

"When Prince Charles married Lady Diana Spencer in 1981, 147 brewers created special brews, and at the Queen's Silver Jubilee in 1977, more than 70 regional breweries created a commemorative drink. We therefore wanted to do something to mark the royal wedding of 2011 and play our part in history."

There has always been a strong link between beer and weddings, dating back more than 4,000 years, he said.

The word 'bridal' comes from bride ale – a special beer homebrewed to celebrate weddings.

Mr Moodley added: "Enjoying a Royal Match on April 29 will be the perfect way to toast the royal couple's future happiness and we intend to send William and Kate a crate of Royal Match for them to enjoy on their honeymoon."

Royal Match joins the other five brews in the Moodley's portfolio; its signature Toad Rock bitter, Poundage Porter, Pantiles Porter, Penshurst Pleasure and Smockham Ale.

And if you want to taste the special beer ahead of the big day, Moodley's Royal

Match is on sale now, priced at £2.20 a bottle.



CHEERS: The wedding of Kate Middleton and Prince William will be celebrated across the UK

Hawk on patrol

TRADERS on the historic Pantiles in Tunbridge Wells have teamed up in a bid to wage war on pigeons.

They are now employing a hawk to patrol the skies and ruffle the feathers of the 'flying rat' pigeon population, which they claim are damaging buildings and making the precinct look a mess, due to their droppings.

Richard Simm, chair of the Association of Pantiles Traders, said: "They're unhygienic and are causing quite a lot of damage to various buildings – so they have to go."

Rocco home safe

A PUPPY believed to have been pinched by crooks from a home in Strood has been found, safe and well, and reunited with its owners.

Rocco, the Staffordshire Bull Terrier, is thought to have been taken after a raid on the home, during which a safe was also stolen.

It prompted his owners to launch a massive publicity campaign for his safe return. A Facebook group set up to appeal for information attracted over 1,000 members.

Rocco was eventually found by walkers in woods near Tesco, in Gillingham.

To see this clip search 'crisps' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



A new range of Kent Crisps has been launched. Julie Maddocks spoke to the man behind the idea.

Fort's 21-gun salute for Wills and Kate's big day

A HISTORIC fortress in Chatham has received permission from The Queen to fire a 21-gun salute as part of the royal wedding celebrations, *writes Jill Hurst.*

Buckingham Palace has approved plans for Fort Amherst to fire the tribute at midday, following the Westminster Abbey service of Prince William and Kate Middleton.

It will be the first time the guns have been fired for a salute for more than a century.

Glenn Robinson, project coordinator, said: "The chance to fire a full royal salute of 21 guns is a very rare honour for a non-military organisation."

The salute will be fired using five black powder cannon on gun carriages by re-enactors from the Napoleonic Association.

The Fort Amherst Heritage Trust said it believed it was the only 21-gun salute being fired on April 21.

Repairs to the brickwork are to be carried out beforehand by the Royal Engineers, who originally built the fort.

Fort Amherst was constructed in 1756 to protect the south eastern approaches to Chatham Dockyard and the River Medway against a French invasion.

The land was acquired by two Acts of Parliament in 1708 and 1709 and the fort was originally designed by Captain John Desmoutre in 1755.

During the Napoleonic Wars the Chatham defences were enlarged and strengthened considerably. From 1802 to 1811 French prisoners of war were set to work on extending tunnels and creating vast underground stores, shelters, new magazines, barracks, guardrooms and gun batteries.

Fittingly, the fort's saluting battery is called Prince William's Battery, with its barracks overlooking the town centre.

Fort Amherst is part of the site put forward for World Heritage status by Medway Council. Other attractions included in the bid are Chatham Historic Dockyard, Upnor Castle, Brompton village and barracks, the Pembroke site's former naval barracks and the Great Lines.

See www.fortamherst.com or call 01634 847747 for more information.

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Disillusioned Anglicans look to Rome for tradition

CHURCHES have seen their congregations decimated this week after dissident Anglican priests and their parishioners turned to Rome.

Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of the exodus in both Sevenoaks and Tunbridge Wells, as worshippers opted instead to celebrate their first mass at Catholic churches.

In Tunbridge Wells, Father Ed Tomlinson led 70 worshippers to join St Anselm's Roman Catholic Church in Pembury, leaving a congregation of just 15 at his former church, St Barnabas.

Meanwhile, Father Ivan Aquilina took 40 parishioners with him to St Thomas' Roman Catholic Church in Sevenoaks, leaving 50 at the town's St John the Baptist Church.

They join about 600 Anglicans nationally who have decided to leave the Church of England over liberal reforms such as the ordination of women bishops.

Pope Benedict XVI has created a body called the English Ordinate, for Church of England traditionalists who want to switch allegiance to Rome while retaining some of their Anglican customs.

Father Tomlinson said: "The big day for us was last Sunday, when we said goodbye. Wednesday was the beginning of Lent and we are joining with the Catholic Church to celebrate that."

Tentative

He described this week's move as a "very quiet, tentative first-step" in preparing to convert to the Ordinate for Holy Week at Easter.

The future of St Barnabas in Stanley Road looks bleak with just 15 Anglican parishioners left.

"It makes its viability very difficult," Father Tomlinson said. "One of the really sad things is that I proposed to the Church of England we might share the building and work together, but the Church of England has been a bit sore about that, so we're leaving with nothing."

"We've not changed what we teach, what has changed is the wider Church of England, who want to worship in a different way. It was a matter of standing up for what we believe in."

Father Aquilina spoke about his decision to leave the Church of England and his former church in Quaker's Hall Lane.

"The most important thing that moved me to join the Ordinate is Jesus - I believe that we have to be faithful to what he said."

Speaking about the changes in the Church of England, he added: "The ordination of women to the priesthood is just part. It is a question of the unity of the church and not working together on important issues such as re-marrying divorcees and gay marriages. The Church of England is deciding, rather than talking with Christians to find a common decision."

To see this clip search 'Spitfire' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



A replica of the first prototype was on display at the Battle of Britain Memorial at Capel-le-Ferne

£250m cost of getting our roads up to scratch

By **MARIJKE COX**

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COUNTY Hall's highways chiefs have admitted it would take a one-off payment of £250 million to bring Kent's 5,000 miles of road up to standard.

But with £95m savings needed overall in the authority's budget for 2011/12 and a 20 per cent drop in the roads' money pot, Kent County Council has had to devise resourceful ways to ensure efficient maintenance of our pothole-ridden highways.

A KCC spokesman said the £250m was a one-off figure that would allow the authority to restore the county's roads, covering a wide range of works.

He stressed that if the money was spent, it would not include emergency works, but non-urgent, low-grade maintenance.

"If this sum were spent on our roads, they would still require between £50-60m annually to maintain," he said.

Leader of KCC Paul Carter told the BBC the authority was spending £40-£50m on roads - without an initial £250m blitz.

With mounting financial pressure and a reduction in Government grants of about 20 per cent for highways, the authority has had to come up with schemes to keep Kent's drivers moving.

Director of Kent Highway Services, John Burr, said efforts were being concentrated through efficiency savings, contract control and smarter ways of working. This includes using pre-wet salting when gritting the roads, which involves spraying a saline solution on to salt as it is fired out, causing it to stick to the road surface and prevent it from being blown off.



POT HOLES: Two winters of bad weather have wreaked havoc on roads across Kent

Growth retardants are also being used on grass verges so they require fewer cuts.

Mr Burr said smarter ways of working would help keep Kent moving and improve the 5,000-mile road network.

"Maintaining and improving the safety of our roads remains our top priority," he said.

"Further funds are also invested in preventative treatments. This type of investment helps reduce costs in the longer term."

In January, a month-long pothole blitz was launched involving an army of tarmac firms fixing dangerous potholes across the county.

Last year a 'find and fix' campaign was rolled out to repair damage to roads caused by snow and ice.

Over the next few weeks KCC will assess the damage caused to highways during the winter with a view to running a similar campaign this year.

Pair jailed for torture attack

TWO young women jailed for imprisoning and torturing a former friend during a horrific 18-hour attack after a row over a man have had their sentences upheld.

Georgia Fenn, 18, was subject to a brutal attack which included being scalded with boiling water mixed with sugar.

Lucy Viner-Mood, 22, and Lois Gibson, 18, both of Homewood Road, Langton Green, were sentenced at Maidstone Crown Court last year.

Viner-Mood was given a five-year jail term for false imprisonment and three-and-a-half years for assault occasioning actual bodily harm (ABH), to run concurrently. Her accomplice, Gibson, was sentenced to three years for false imprisonment and two years for ABH, also to run at the same time.

Whale buried

THE 45-foot-long sperm whale washed up at Pegwell Bay in Ramsgate was cut up and removed last weekend.

Samples, including parts of its jawbone, have been taken away for further examination at the Natural History Museum, while the rest of the carcass has been buried in a landfill site.

An on-site autopsy revealed the juvenile hadn't eaten for up to four days before it was washed ashore last week.

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THE INTERVIEW



BY NICK AMES

Hero's return to finest hour

WING Commander Robert Foster DFC, of 605 Squadron, is one of the last surviving members of what Winston Churchill famously called 'The Few'.

He flew Hurricanes during the Battle of Britain and last weekend went along to the memorial to the aerial conflict on the cliffs at Capel le Ferne, where a replica Spitfire was being placed on display. It is a faithful rendition of the prototype of the famous warplane.

"I always enjoy coming here, it is very moving," he said. "I know there is a monument in London but this seems more relevant. It was in these skies and over the White Cliffs that the Battle of Britain was mainly fought."

Shortly before World War Two, Wing Cmdr Foster learnt to fly with the Royal Air Force Volunteer Reserve.

Called up for service in September, 1939, he completed his training and was posted to 605 Squadron, equipped with Hawker Hurricane fighters. By early September, 1940, he and his squadron were in the thick of the air fighting over southern England, operating from Croydon.

First sortie

"I flew my first operational sortie on September 7, the day the Blitz on London really started," he said.

"I remember firing into the enemy formations, but I don't think I hit anything.

"I do remember the first chap I shot down. We were bounced [attacked and surprised] by some ME109s [Luftwaffe fighters] who came out of the sun.

"My friend Charles English's aircraft was hit. He tried to get out but his parachute stuck and he didn't make it. I spun away and as I pulled out I could see a 109 right in front of me. I was behind him and he didn't see me, so I gave him a two or three second burst and he crashed."

Wing Cmdr Foster – then a Pilot Officer – usually intercepted attacking fighter and bomber formations over Sussex and would then frequently chase them across Kentish skies. He said he only remembers the war

when he is asked about it – and during last year's 70th anniversary "it was all I was ever asked about".

However his recollections are extremely clear. "I remember once going after some ME110s [twin engine fighters] and my engine blew up – I thought I'd been hit," he said.

"There was smoke and glycol [engine coolant] all over the place and later I found it was just a mechanical fault. I saw a large field and managed to get down on it – turned out to be Gatwick.

Bombed

"Another time I was running out of fuel and knew I wouldn't get home – so I put down at West Malling which had just been bombed. The people there were very upset with me. The commanding officer shouted at me: 'Get off – as soon as the Germans see a plane here they bomb us'. So I left – after getting my fuel, of course."

But not all air combat ended so safely. "We attacked some 109s over Maidstone and drove them off," Wing Cmdr Foster said. "But my squadron CO stuck around. Maybe he wanted to see if any of the enemy were still there. But he was attacked and shot down and died."

Surviving the battle, Wing Cmdr Foster joined 54 Squadron and later became an RAF instructor. His unit became part of a group sent out to Australia to help defend the Darwin area and engaged the Japanese incursions throughout 1943.

He finished the war with seven confirmed victories and three probables.

Awarded the DFC for his efforts, he returned to the UK and was given an assignment with an RAF public relations unit, ending up in Normandy within three weeks of the invasion of 1944.

Often serving right up in the frontline, Wing Cmdr Foster saw the war at very close hand, and then quite by chance became one of the first RAF officers to enter Paris with the liberating French army, and again by chance, was in General Charles de Gaulle's triumphant procession down the Champs-Élysées.



STANDING TALL: Robert Foster next to the replica Hurricane at Capel le Ferne, where his name is inscribed on the Battle of Britain National Memorial wall (inset, top)

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Flood defence action 'vital to save coastline'

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

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COASTAL experts have warned that preparations must be made now to prevent parts of Kent being lost to the sea forever.

According to new research by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, the county's extensive coastline is one of the most at-risk areas in the UK, due to the expected rise in global sea levels and increased storm frequency over the next 90 years.

The study – Impacts of Climate Change on Disadvantaged UK Coastal Communities – comes just weeks after it was revealed that global warming played a part in causing the floods of 2000, that hit Maidstone and Tonbridge in particular.

Jeremy Richardson, director of the engineering consultancy URS-Scott Wilson, which co-authored the document said: "There's a need for a realistic debate on how to protect coastal regions because some tough choices are going to have to be made."

"We need to consider the risks, how we're going to spend the money, and what areas we must protect first."

"It would be great to start work on this straight away, but that's going to be terribly difficult to do until we get



STORMS: Weather and rising sea levels are just two of the factors causing concern for coastal experts

enough people who understand the full extent of the issues."

According to the Rowntree report, the parts of Kent on the Thames Estuary are most vulnerable to erosion, due to their low-lying and soft-sediment coasts.

Flooding

Increased rainfall is the main cause of concern for people living on the northern or western coastlines.

In 2009, the Environment Agency revealed that one in six homes in England is at risk of flooding from rivers, the sea or overflowing drains, and that investment in flood defences will need to almost double to £1 billion a year by 2035.

However, the Government has slashed flood defence spending by

more than 20 per cent to a figure of £529 million a year for the next four years.

Mr Richardson said: "The Coalition has said it realises how important flood defence is, but clearly the cuts leave us with a huge job to do."

"There is an increased number of tough decisions to make over the next few years, but we would still have these decisions without the credit crunch."

In March last year, emergency planners at Kent County Council drew up the county's most detailed flood response document ever.

The plan – which will be updated on KCC's intranet site – includes risk assessments, the role of the emergency services and which locations are most likely to flood.



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Government urged to pressure drugs company into deferring redundancies after

Commons plea to minister on Pfizer timeline

By **MARIJKE COX**

marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

SANDWICH MP Laura Sandys has made an impassioned plea to Government to push Pfizer to defer redundancies to give staff a better chance of finding jobs.

In a parliamentary debate on Monday, Ms Sandys criticised the drugs giant for giving employees just 90 days to explore new work opportunities. Addressing science minister David Willetts, she called on the Government to speak to the company.

"Pfizer has been at Sandwich for 60 years, but has given its staff and the community just 90 days to readjust," she said.

Assets

"We know significant numbers of staff will be made redundant soon with little time for support to be put in place in terms of helping them set up businesses or identify investors who might want to buy some of the assets and keep those important jobs at the site in Sandwich.

"While I pay tribute to the local management who are trying to put in place new opportunities, they too have little time to ensure jobs stay before redundancies are issued.

"This is a great disappointment, as there are some really exciting opportunities. The site and the staff have real potential."

Ms Sandys said more time was needed from Pfizer to give staff a chance to find new opportunities in the wake of the bombshell last month, when the drugs giant announced it would be pulling out of Sandwich, with the loss of 2,400 jobs.

Taking into consideration contractors at



CONCERN: South Thanet MP Laura Sandys
INSET: Science minister David Willetts

the site and public sector cutbacks, Ms Sandys said the figure could see an additional 5,000 jobs lost in east Kent.

She stressed that staff wanting to set up businesses will not have the time to get finances together or set up packages before the dispersal of employees begins.



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staff get 90 days to explore options and homes market awaits impact of closure

Pfizer's decision to pull out of Sandwich could have repercussions for the east Kent property sector as well as the jobs market.

A law firm says it expects the drug giant's withdrawal and the loss of thousands of jobs to deflate the housing market at the top end. Senior partner at Fosters Law, Edward Foster, said although the lower end of the market would most likely remain stable, those in homes worth more than £250,000 could be forced to reduce selling prices.

His warning followed the announcement by Pfizer that it was leaving Sandwich, putting at least 2,400 jobs at risk and raising concerns that many people would leave the area. Mr Foster, whose firm has offices in Broadstairs, Canterbury and Herne Bay, said: "If the market is suddenly filled with properties, prices will fall. It's demand and supply.

"Prices will be pushed down and properties in places such as Ash and Wingham, where it is usually more expensive to buy, will become more accessible.

"As soon as a large supply of properties enters the market it becomes a buyers' market. Pfizer employees may have to accept a lot less than what they paid for their properties."

Mr Foster told KoS the impact would also affect rental homes where landlords would have to drop their charges.

"If you can get an executive four-bedroom house for £200 less, no-one is going to pay £200 more," he said.

Mr Foster said another effect could be employees 'downsizing' as a result of highly-skilled workers having to take lower-paid jobs.

"This would increase demand at the lower end of the market and this area, up to £250,000, would remain stable – supply and demand

would balance out," he said. "It's people with homes priced above who will be most affected.

"Unless a quick solution is reached we could see an exodus of high-paid individuals and an increase in supply of properties for sale or rent; particularly those towns and villages around Sandwich and Canterbury that make up the 'Pfizer corridor'. This is unlikely to result in a wholesale crash. Properties in the area offer great value. East Kent remains a great place to live and work.

"We have high-speed rail, excellent transport links and the Continent is a stone's throw away. We have a fantastic pool of talent and the quality of life is hard to beat. If that cannot attract inward investment, what can?"

Another property expert was not convinced

Pfizer's departure would push prices down or have a severe impact on the market. Steve Evans, associate director of Oakwood Homes, which has offices across east Kent, said he believed the market would remain stable.

However, he said Pfizer's decision could have an impact on people moving to the area.

"I'm not expecting a large impact in terms of prices – a lot depends on the time frame of the Pfizer situation," he said. "If we're looking at people leaving the area over two or three years, it's probably not going to have a big impact.

"However, people who may have been looking to make an aspirational move here for work may reconsider that," he said. "I think this will dampen demand."



SHUTDOWN: Pfizer's European R&D centre

"We can't stop Pfizer from leaving the site – it's their decision and their responsibility – but I'd like to ask the minister to help us with our discussions," she said.

"I'm not asking Pfizer to change their exit date, 2012 will be when they exit their activities in Sandwich, but that does not mean

that they have to rush the redundancies now when so much has been put in place to mitigate the company's decision. Ninety days after 60 years. I'm not sure that is fair or reasonable. We need more time. The staff and contractors need more time and our east Kent economy needs more time."

Mr Willetts agreed with Ms Sandys that the 90-day period was a difficult prospect for staff.

"After 60 years of presence in the area, during which time researchers and staff have developed extraordinarily successful drugs, it is understandable the prospect of a 90-day process is very painful," he said.

Ms Sandys also called on the Government to back the creation of a life science centre at the Sandwich site and discussed the improvement of transport links to the facility.

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Grammars 'not a step up ladder'

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

WORKING class children are no more likely to climb the social ladder by attending grammar schools instead of comprehensives, new research suggests.

Kent has more grammar schools than any other county in the UK, and is one of only a handful that still operates a selective system.

But using a sample of more than 3,300 adults from across the UK, academics from the universities of Oxford and Bath Spa found that poorer children who attended comprehensives were just as likely as their grammar school equivalents to land better jobs than their parents.

Maidstone resident Rebecca Matthews – chairwoman of the Stop the Eleven Plus campaign group – said the findings of the report came as little surprise.

"It's an interesting piece of research, but the idea that grammar schools provide social



MYTH: Social mobility is not dependent on attending grammar school, research shows

mobility is a complete myth anyway," she added.

"The researchers have used data from people who are now in their 50s, so when they went to school the whole country would have

been using the selective system that Kent has held on to.

"The situation now is so different because even fewer working class children get to go to grammar school. Tutoring has a hugely significant effect on whether a child passes a test or not, and only middle class people can afford it."

Of the 3,300 people studied in the report, a third had attended comprehensive schools, a quarter had attended grammar schools, and two-fifths had been educated in a secondary modern.

The researchers compared the jobs the adults did at the age of 33 with the work their fathers had done 17 years earlier –

when the adults were 16 – to see whether they had climbed the social ladder.

All those sampled had sat a test to measure their academic ability at the age of 11.

Co-author Adam Swift said that grammar schools "confer no more advantage" to working-class children than to those from slightly more wealthy backgrounds, which Gravesend-based education expert Peter Read said demonstrated the weakness of the report.

"That is to say both categories do have an advantage," he said. "Why should they give more advantage to one group than the other?"

Idealistic

"In fact, those of the sample who went to comprehensive schools were part of the initial wave of comprehensives, before the great abolition of grammar schools which took place in the 1970s and 80s.

"It is self-evident in nearly every wave of educational change that the first into the fray were idealistic and made it work, as this research shows. I wonder if the same results would hold true today."

Last year, a separate report by researchers at the University of Buckingham found that grammar schools were more socially-inclusive than many of the UK's best comprehensives.

It revealed that the highest-scoring comprehensives were far less likely to take their fair share of youngsters from disadvantaged homes than the 164 remaining grammars – 33 of which are in Kent.

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Education takes priority over hols, says headmaster

A HEADTEACHER has rejected claims that poorer families who take their children on holiday during term-time are being discriminated against, *writes Jill Hurst*.

Nine primary school headteachers on the Isle of Sheppey say they will fine parents who take their children out of school to go on holiday.

Some parents have criticised the policy, claiming it will exclude many children from ever experiencing a holiday away.

But Alan Bayford, head of West Minster Primary school and chairman of the group of headteachers, said education had to be the priority.

He said: "We didn't make the rule. This is a Government guideline issued by the Department of Education.

"We decided we would follow the directive and issued a joint letter to all parents.

"While we appreciate many of our pupils are from very poor backgrounds, parents have a duty to their schooling. If they want to raise their children out of poverty, they need to get an education.

"I am positive the vast majority of parents value their children's education and will respond positively to the rule."

However, Gail Morris, whose step-daughter attends a Sheppey school, said: "Going away during the holidays is so much more expensive. It's often three times more than during term-time.

"We only ever went for a week or two. Like many other parents, we just won't be able to have a holiday now.

"They should concentrate on the kids hanging around the streets to get attendance levels up, not penalise us."



FINES: Children may miss out on holidays, parents claim

Attendance at Sheppey schools is among the lowest in the country.

A system of holiday request forms has been withdrawn and families who want to take children out of school must now write to the headteacher and attend a meeting.

In cases of unauthorised absence, schools can instruct the educational welfare officer to issue a penalty notice leading to fines of £50 per child.

Non payment of fines or compliance with attendance policies can result in prosecution. Parents could then face financial sanctions, parenting orders or even prison.



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Gove to re-examine school building plans

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

EDUCATION chiefs have been given until April 11 to spell out the importance of restoring the axed Building Schools for the Future project in Kent.

Last month, Kent County Council defeated the Government in a joint legal action with five other local authorities after proving that Education Secretary Michael Gove failed to consult with them prior to scrapping the scheme last July.

The celebrated £55 billion project was introduced by Labour in 2003, in a bid to improve every secondary school in the country.

Kent's overall programme – the largest building scheme in Europe – was worth an estimated £1.8bn.

Mr Gove has now given the authorities involved in the case until April 11 to provide him with “any and all” information about the axed BSF projects they would like him to reconsider.

KCC leader Cllr Paul Carter said: “I genuinely believe the Secretary of State is revisiting his decision in a comprehensive fashion, as we have been asked to provide a significant amount of new evidence and documentation.”

“We are working with the 14 schools in Gravesham and Thanet that were the most advanced in terms of planning and development, to make sure the submission is as robust as possible. I am much encouraged.”

Eleven Kent schools were rebuilt or refurbished through the BSF programme, but 40 others were told last July that the schemes they had been planning would no longer go ahead.

The 14 that will be reconsidered by Mr Gove were all ‘Wave Four’ projects that

were at the most advanced stages of planning.

However, in a statement, Mr Gove made clear that he is under no obligation to save any of the schools affected by the removal of funding.

He said: “I will make a decision having considered, with an open mind, all of the information gathered over the consultation period and with due regard to my equality duties.”

“As the judge made clear, the final decision on any given school or project still rests with me and I may save all, some, a few or none.” He concluded by saying that “no-one should gain false hope from this decision”.

Mr Gove added that he would not be making direct contact with the affected schools.

He said: “Local authorities will want to engage with the schools and will provide the school-level information they consider necessary for me when making my decision.”



REVIEW: Education chief Michael Gove

Tougher controls deter immigrants

STRINGENT border controls have driven down the number of illegal immigrants attempting to cross the Channel by two thirds – from 29,383 to 9,735 – in one year.

The decrease is being put down to the use of improved technology in northern French ports and the closure of refugee camps in Calais, sending out a message to would-be migrants that UK borders are closed.

Immigration minister and Ashford MP Damian Green said it had been made increasingly difficult for illegal immigrants to evade border controls and reach Britain.

“While the number of vehicles checked has remained stable at 1.5 million, annually, we have seen fewer attempts to cross the Channel illegally – with 9,700 individuals found last year, compared to just over 29,000 in 2009,” he said.

“The increased joint working by the UK Border Agency and the French authorities at continues to ensure the UK's border remains protected.”

Over the past five years, up until 2010, the number of illegal immigrants trying to enter the UK by crossing the Channel had risen year on year.

Between 2007 and 2008 a steep rise of almost 11,500 – 17,859 to 29,271 – was seen.

But in 2008 a new force was launched, in the form of the UK Border Agency, which saw HM Revenue and Customs, the Border and Immigration Agency and UK Visas team up to clamp down on immigrants attempting to enter the country illegally. Teams are stationed in Kent, Northern France and Belgium.

Using state-of-the-art heartbeat detectors and CO2 probes, officers have been able to detect thousands of illegal immigrants hoping to sneak through the borders.

Passive millimetre wave imaging, which works like an X-ray machine – scanning vehicles and picking out different masses and shading – and sniffer dogs are also used.

At Calais, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry screens every vehicle.

Kent Tory MEP Richard Ashworth praised the tough border controls.

He said: “I would like to pay credit to the port authorities, Eurotunnel, the ferry operators and the haulage industry, who have all invested significant amounts of time and money into tackling this problem.”

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Project to revive tower

A PROJECT charting the history of the county is looking for people who remember a curious religious landmark.

The Kent Cultural Baton, which has been travelling through Kent, is heading to Gillingham and is looking for residents who remember Jezreel's Tower.

The building, which stood on the A2 at Chatham Hill, is the latest focus for the project, which has been recording stories as part of the cultural celebrations in the build-up to the 2012 Olympics.

Residents who remember the landmark building are invited to visit Gillingham Pier for the Party on the Pier celebrations this Saturday, to share their memories.

The Kent Cultural Baton is working with artist Simon Barker, who is making a film about the cubic temple built in 1885.

The building was being used as a storage facility for the Co-Operative when it was

By **MATHEW BEECH**

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demolished in 1961, and the last remaining building associated with Jezreel's Tower, in Canterbury Street, was razed to the ground in late 2008.

Jezreel's Tower was built by James Jershom Jezreel, formally known as James Roland White. He joined and took over a small branch of the Christian Israelites religious sect in 1814.

Once he had completed his military service in 1881, White, now using the name Jezreel, decided his church needed a headquarters and a temple, which was to be built on Chatham Hill – the area's highest point.

The design was inspired by Revelation XXI, 16: "And the city lieth foursquare, and the length thereof is as great as the breadth ... the length and the breadth and the height thereof are equal."

Inspired by this, Jezreel wanted to create a

perfect cube, with sides 144ft long, but was persuaded by architects to create the building with a 124ft square base and a height of 120ft.

The tower was finished with yellow bricks and eight castellated towers.

Engraved on to the outside of the tower were a trumpet and flying roll, crossed swords of the spirit and the Prince of Wales feathers, representing the Trinity.

Eccentric

The architectural oddity is one of 26 landmark buildings featured in a new book examining British eccentricity, David McKie's Bright Particular Stars: A Gallery of Glorious British Eccentrics.

Following Jezreel's death in 1885, his wife took over control of the sect and the building project, but this came to an end in 1888, when she also died. The unfinished building was put up for sale in 1897 and failed to find a buyer for six years.

Members of the Jezreelites continued to



Picture: CUNNINGHAM

JEZREELS: How the tower looked in 1910

rent parts of the building, but in 1905, they fell behind with the rent and the tower's owners repossessed it.

The holding company began the demolition of the tower in this year, but when the contractors went bankrupt, the tower remained in derelict until 1961, when it was demolished.

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People back port plan referendum

By **MARIJKE COX**

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A GROUNDBREAKING plan to transfer Dover Port into the hands of the community has taken a giant leap forward after the public voted for a referendum on the issue.

A meeting at Dover Town Hall last Thursday saw standing room only, as residents packed out the building to have a say on the future of the port.

Members of Dover People's Port Trust (DPPT) explained the details of the purchase bid, and the motion as to whether a referendum should go ahead was passed. The vote, which will look at whether the port should be transferred into the community's control, will take place within the next 25 days.

Chairman of DPPT Neil Wiggins said he was thrilled with the outcome, and urged people to turn out for the next vote.

"The result of the referendum is not binding on Government, but if there is a large turnout and strong vote for transferring the port to the community, it will put pressure on them," he said. "Given their flagship policy of the big society and more power in the community, I think government would find it very hard to ignore such a high level of feeling and response to the People's Port."

DPPT hopes to buy the Port of Dover with a £200m bid.

Dover MP Charlie Elphicke, who is behind



Picture: PAUL JERREAT

PUT TO VOTE: The public are to decide on whether to bid for Dover Port

the proposals, said residents can join the trust for £10. The remainder of the funds would come from City of London institutions.

Rivals Dover Harbour Board (DHB), which has run the port as a trust since 1606, asked the Government in January, 2010, for permission to privatise the asset.

But the move sparked fierce opposition, and plans were drawn up to create a community-owned port which has received widespread support, including backing from forces' sweetheart Dame Vera Lynn.

DHB, however, called the proposals "unrealistic and undeliverable".

A spokeswoman said the board remained convinced its own scheme represented the best and only option for a sustainable and growing port business.

"Properly costed, economically viable and deliverable, we look forward to a positive decision by the minister as we continue to work towards a new and transformational relationship with our stakeholders," she said.

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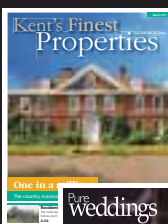
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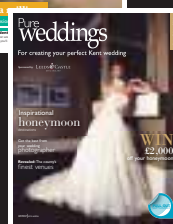
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Police dogs face moment of woof

KENT will welcome police dogs from all over the South East for the annual competition to find the best in the region.

The winner will represent the area and go through to a national police dog competition for 2011. Kent Police will host the regional heats with dogs and their handlers battling it out.

The three-day event from March 17-19 sees the trained hounds and their handlers put their skills to the test in a series of work-related tasks, with the final day held at the Detling Showground.

Held on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the event encourages the professional development of the handlers and their dogs.

The first two phases will be held at various locations around the county and involve searching and tracking.

The final stage at Detling will involve testing the dogs' obedience, agility, crowd control and chase and detain skills.

Statue owner has beef with thieves

A BIZARRE crime has deprived a Medway householder of two ornamental bulls stolen from his gateway.

The metal bulls were taken from the top two pillars outside the gates of a property in Spekes Road, Hempstead, between 6pm on Wednesday, February 23, and 11.30am the following day.

The identical black statues are 2ft long and 1ft tall and each weigh 30kg.

The owner has offered a reward of £100 for information leading to the safe return of his property.

PC Amanda Taylor said: "The bulls are of great sentimental value to the owner and they are obviously very keen to get them back. We would like to hear from anyone who may know who took them or knows where they are now."

Anyone with information can contact Kent Police in Medway on 01634 792531 or Kent Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555 111.

WIN! Family tickets to the KENT Game&Equine Festival

In association with



THE Kent Game and Equine Festival is one of the first of the great regional game fairs of the year, and is set to return on March 26-27, 2011, at the Kent Showground, Detling.

This event, which is open from 10am to 4pm on both days, is regularly attended by more than 10,000 visitors.

The show is a celebration of countryside life from fishing and shooting to traditional crafts and locally produced food; and with an exciting array of equestrian entertainment and education, the show offers visitors the ultimate countryside experience.

And you can join the crowds for free as we have 10 family tickets – two adults and children – worth £26 each, to be won.

The indoor Supreme Equine Arena will feature international show jumpers Graham and Tina Fletcher, a native stallion parade, and a sports and competition stallion parade together with a fun and fast-paced Pony Club Horse and Hound show.

If your interest is in fishing, then be prepared for a treat, as Britain's most famous



fisherman, Charles Jardine will be demonstrating his skills and offering coaching.

Charles has a passion for cooking and based on the 'catch it and cook theme' will be demonstrating a fabulous Fisherman's Lunch – Food fit for Fishers in the Game Cookery theatre.

There will be much on offer for dog lovers, including the British Association for Shooting and Conservation running four gundog saturdays, advice from the Gundog Clinic, terrier and lurcher shows, and a dog crèche on site.

The show's other features will include an on-site clay shoot, a shooting school, air-rifle coaching, archery, falconry, racing ferrets, vintage tractors and machinery, and the game cookery theatre.

There will also be a countryside and equestrian shopping village with more than 100 retail outlets.

Discounted advance tickets are available by visiting www.contour.uk.net or calling 01749 813899.

To be in with a chance of winning a family ticket just answer this question:

Q) Where is the Kent Game and Equine Festival taking place?

- A. Detling
- B. Ashford
- C. Canterbury

Text EQUINE (space) answer, name and address and send to 64343.

Texts cost £1 plus standard network rates, and entries received after the closing date of March 18, 2011, will not be counted but you may still be charged.

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By **MARIJKE COX**

marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

ENGLISH Heritage has launched a Save our School Trips campaign, to stop the ailing tradition becoming another casualty of the downturn.

It follows a 14 per cent drop in the number of class excursions to Kent's historic sites over the last four years, caused by schools being unable to justify transport costs, and teachers' concerns over the "risk assessment culture".

According to research by English Heritage, 94 per cent of teachers support school trips as a valuable tool to enrich topics covered in the classroom, but three quarters see transport expenses as one of the main obstacles.

This could mean a generation of children missing out on the memorable experience of excursions and the knowledge they bring.

In a bid to save the age-old school trip English Heritage is offering 50 per cent towards transport costs to one of its historic sites in Kent, for the first three learning groups to book a visit.

The offer includes Dover, Deal and Walmer castles; Down House – the home of Charles Darwin – near Orpington; and one of the country's most important Roman villas, at Lullingstone, near Dartford.

Fran Lashmar, English Heritage education manager for the South East, said she believed missing out on school trips would have a negative effect on education.

Active learning

"This isn't just in history, but art, drama, geography and across the whole curriculum," she said.

"Ninety per cent of us will remember more through active learning; it allows students of all abilities to put their studies into context in a way simply not possible in the classroom.

"Our heritage is for everyone, and we see offering schools free access to our sites as the way to break down stereotypical barriers for those students who would not normally have the opportunity to visit.

"For some children, this is the only

School trips 'at risk from cuts'



Picture: PAUL JERRIAT

OFFER: Schools booking a trip to Dover Castle could get help towards transport costs

chance they have to see these places where their families don't see visiting a monument as a first priority."

English Heritage offers full support for teachers on educational visits, with free resources on the group's website as well as free access to the sites.

Ms Lashmar said with the new campaign some schools will now also be able to save money on transport costs, which can often reach hundreds of pounds.

"Teachers and schools are under so much

pressure," she said. "They lost the Building Schools for the Future funding and there are other cuts being made through back door.

"The risk assessment culture we have now also makes it harder."

To be in with a chance of receiving 50 per cent towards transport costs for an educational visit, go to www.services.english-heritage.org.uk/educationbookings and quote the code SOST March 2011.

The deadline for applications is Friday, March 18.

Sunlight sparks blaze at home

A DOG and cat had to be rescued from a burning building after a bizarre blaze was sparked in Gillingham.

Fire crews sent to put out the flames on Monday afternoon believe it was started when sunlight reflected by a vanity mirror caused clothing to catch light.

Two engines from Medway Fire Station were sent to tackle the incident at about 2.15pm after neighbours heard a smoke alarm and saw smoke coming from the house.

Crews tackled the blaze in a first-floor bedroom and rescued the pets from the property. The fire was extinguished within half an hour, damaging up to 20 per cent of the room.

Crew manager Nina Batsford said: "It appears that sun through the window had been reflected on to clothing and caused a fire. It's a good reminder to people to think carefully about where they place mirrors."

POLICE are appealing for witnesses after a woman in her 30s was killed on the M20.

The woman was on the carriageway and died after she was hit by a passing vehicle.

It is not yet clear how the woman came to be on the motorway.

Kent Police's Serious Collision Investigation Unit is continuing to appeal for witnesses following the incident at about 8.20pm on Sunday, just south of junction 10 at Ashford.

All three lanes were closed between junction 10 and 11 while investigators were at the scene. The motorway was re-opened at about 7am on Monday.

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Welcome aboard Archant KOS Media's fourth travel and leisure extravaganza

Cruise along to our show

THIS weekend there's only one place to be – Dover Cruise Terminal for the return of Archant KOS Media's celebrated Travel and Leisure Show.

The event – on Sunday, March 13, from 10am-4pm – promises to be better than ever for anyone wanting to plan a holiday or a day out. Visitors will be treated to presentations from industry experts as well as information from a French contingent who are taking part in the show for the first time in its four-year history.

Guests will be in with a chance of winning from a selection of almost 100 prizes donated by Archant KOS Media's exhibitors, including a two-week cruise courtesy of Fred. Olsen Cruise Lines.



Other prizes include weekend breaks in the UK or France, entry to some of the county's most popular attractions and dinner at a selection of top French restaurants.

Tickets for Les Miserables, overnight stays at leading hotels and B&Bs, and falconry lessons at Quex Park in Birchington are also up for grabs.

Archant KOS Media events manager Liz Hare said: "Every year the show goes from

strength to strength, with many people returning saying they wouldn't miss it for the world. We have a completely new area this year devoted entirely to France, featuring French companies which have come across the Channel to take representation for the first time.

"Since its launch three years ago, this show has been very successful and with registrations already pouring in and 97 prizes on offer, I hope this year will exceed all expectations."

The show will run during British Tourism Week, which aims to raise awareness of the importance of Britain's visitor economy.

Organisers behind the national event, which runs from March 12-20, gave Archant KOS Media official accreditation for the annual Travel and Leisure Show.

Continuing on from the success, visitors

will be treated to a host of exhibitors from top travel and ferry companies, as well as information about attractions in Britain and Kent, for those planning to holiday at home.

Owners of the county's historic sites, gardens, attractions and other hidden gems will also be exhibiting.

Last year's show won the praise of the travel industry, with many putting in early reservations to secure display stands in 2011.

Roy and Margaret Jones, from Go Cruise, said: "We were trying to think of words that would describe the show – 'fantastic, best show ever, great organisation, amazing' – but it doesn't really sum up how good we find it. "The show has gone from strength to strength over the last three years."

There will be hot and cold food and drinks, and children's entertainment. Entry is free, and free parking will also be available.



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Stand 50 Discover Folkstone
Stand 51 Kent Wildlife Trust
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Goodnestone Park Gardens
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Post Office staff vote for strike

POST Office clerks have voted to go on strike in a dispute over pay and job security, *writes Steve Knight.*

The industrial action, which could take place this month, affects about 100 Kent counter staff in Crown branches as opposed to privately-run sub-post offices or franchises such as WH Smith.

About 95 per cent of the county's workers voted in favour of going on strike when they were balloted by the Communication Workers' Union last week.

The union says members have been denied a pay rise for the third year running, despite increased profits at Post Office Ltd (POL) of £72 million last year, with managers winning a 2.25 per cent raise and directors an extra 21 per cent in pay and benefits.

"POL is showing callous indifference to the work and living standards of hard-working counter staff," said CWU representative for Kent, Mole Meade.

"I'm optimistic we won't have to go ahead with the strike. It would be foolhardy to not get back round the table and discuss a meaningful pay rise for people who haven't had one for three years."

Guarantee

The Kent counter staff were among 4,000 CWU members across 373 offices nationwide who were asked to vote for or against industrial action. The union claims POL is also refusing to extend a guarantee on the number of Crown offices – which provide a full range of services including tax discs and passports – which it says implies further closures are planned.

CWU deputy general secretary Dave Ward said: "This is about more than pay. The job security of members and future of the Crown office network is also at stake."

"We want a strong network of Crown offices, but the Government and the company appear to be hiding the fact that they are planning a programme of further closures."

"Given the lack of support from Government, we fear for the future of the network."

According to POL, the Crown office network is losing £55 million a year and cannot afford to offer counter staff a pay rise.

A spokesman said: "Post Office is disappointed that staff have voted in favour of strike action."

"Ninety-seven per cent of Post Offices are run by sub-postmasters and will be unaffected by any industrial action."

"Deliveries are also unaffected by this ballot result."

Chimney warning

THE cold snap has seen an increase in chimney fires as residents turn to open fires and wood-burning stoves.

Firefighters issued safety advice, urging people to ensure chimneys are swept to prevent a build-up of soot and residue.

Crews attended 13 chimney fires throughout the county in the last week. Blazes broke out in Pembury, Sissinghurst, Paddock Wood, Edenbridge, Headcorn and Langton Green.

A fire service official said: "It has been a long, cold winter and we urge those with open fires and wood-burning stoves to get chimneys swept and flues checked."

There were also fires in Ashford, East Malling and Upnor. In the east of the county, firefighters attended calls in Westgate, Sandgate, Whitstable and Ramsgate.

MILLIONS of bugs will help make the River Medway cleaner than ever. The bugs are part of an upgrade at Ham Hill wastewater treatment works in Snodland, and eat away at contaminants, such as ammonia.

The bugs grow inside 22-metre diameter tanks, which the wastewater trickles through during the final treatment stage.

About 12 million litres of wastewater flow through Ham Hill treatment works each day in dry weather, rising to 30 million litres a day in wet weather.

TO CELEBRATE the Year of the Pier, artists with studios on Margate's harbour arm are hosting events this weekend.

Party on the Pier opens at 10am on Saturday, when an Illustrated History of the Pier will be followed by a tug-of-war.

In the afternoon, Robert Poulter and his New Model Theatre will perform Merry Margate – 250 years of history in 30 minutes, at 2pm, 3pm and 4pm. There will be activities in the gallery, plus a window dressing contest in the Old Town. Sunday starts with keep fit at 11am, Seaside Singalong will be at 4pm, followed by belly-dancing.

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Call to tackle HGV blind spot dangers

A CAMPAIGN aimed at reducing the number of crashes caused by HGVs has received strong backing from Europe.

Some 323 MEPs signed a declaration calling on the European Commission to review old laws they claim fail to tackle problems with lorry drivers' blind spots, which has led to hundreds of fatalities on the roads.

It comes in response to the national Save Me See Me campaign, which was launched by the family of 30-year-old Eilidh Cairns, who died in 2009 after being hit by a lorry in London on her way to work. The campaign is pushing for mandatory cameras and sensors to improve visibility.

Kent MEP Peter Skinner has put his weight behind the campaign, saying the problem in the county was particularly bad.

He said: "This heightens the pressure on law-makers in Brussels to look again at how we can prevent these needless tragedies. By fitting lorries with sensors, cameras and better brakes, cyclists and pedestrians will become more visible and drivers will be able to react more quickly in an emergency."

"Lorry drivers want to be as safe

as possible. Blind spots not only affect the safety of other road users, but their safety as well. Making the streets safer for all road users must be a priority."

Thousands of lorries travel on Kent's roads every day, particularly on the M20 and M2, with the Port of Dover handling 1.8 million every year. Two years ago, 58-year-old Pierre Foulkes, from Deal, was killed outside the Eastern Docks in a collision with an HGV while on his bike. The same year a two-year-old was seriously injured when his buggy was struck by a lorry in Margate. His sister and grandmother were also hurt.

Strong

An investigation is also under way into the death of a female driver in a collision involving a lorry in Cranbrook last month.

Kate Cairns, the sister of Eilidh, said: "This is an international problem but a simple thing such as cameras would help. Eilidh was familiar with her route to work and an experienced and strong cyclist. But she ended up under the wheels of a truck."

"Drivers are isolated in their cabs with massive blind spots all around. Cameras are essential."

'Please help find the man who killed our loving dad'

By JILL HURST

jill.hurst@kosmedia.co.uk

THE devastated family of a man killed by a single punch say they know the identity of his killer and have appealed to the community to help bring him to justice.

Police fear it is only a matter of time before the "violent thug" hurts someone again. However, frustrated officers do not have enough evidence to make a charge.

Adrian Milner, 48, was punched in the face as he left the New Inn pub and headed home with friend Michael Coomber along Church Road, Murston, just before 8pm on Tuesday, December 28, 2010.

Force

The force of the punch caused him to fall to the floor and he hit the back of his head. He was taken to a neurological hospital in London, but doctors were unable to save the father of two. He died on January 9.

Andy Clarke was Mr Milner's best friend for more than 40 years. He said: "We know who did this and we are absolutely positive people close to the person responsible know he did it."

Mr Milner's family, including partner Gemma Stutter, are still struggling to come to terms with what has happened. Speaking to Adrian's killer, Gemma pleaded: "Do the right thing and hand yourself in."

And to those who may have information she added: "No matter how small or irrelevant you may think the information is, please come forward."



TRAGEDY: Adrian Milner with Gemma and Molly



CCTV: The two men police want to trace

Gemma, who was set to marry Mr Milner, said: "Someone has played God. It was a random attack and until whoever did this is caught, we will never know what happened."

"Please put yourself in our shoes. We've had someone really special taken from us. It was so needless."

Police say they are "committed" to finding Mr Milner's killer, who they believe is a local man.

Det Insp Lee Whitehead said: "This was a cowardly attack on two vulnerable men who were easy prey. They'd been to the pub, had a few pints, a good time, and were walking home. The attack left two sons and a step-daughter without a father."

"Whoever did this is a violent thug. And it is likely he is just as violent at home."

"It may be that someone is in a violent relationship and is frightened to come forward. By coming forward you will be protecting your family and helping to see justice done. I want to offer reassurance we will be discreet in our inquiries and offer full witness protection."

Mr Milner lived with Gemma and her 11-year old daughter Molly, and grown-up sons Joshua and Jason. The sons said: "We are devastated to have lost our dad. The void can never be filled."

Molly said: "He was a lovely, caring man who made me laugh and never told me off."

Mr Milner's brother, Duncan, said: "Adrian was extremely popular and his death has had a lot of impact. He had a wide circle of friends in all walks of life. It's still such a shock."

"If someone was brought to justice his death might be easier to accept."

Police have released a CCTV image of two men they would like to speak to.

• A 35-year-old man bailed in connection with the investigation has been released without charge. A 30-year-old Sittingbourne man remains on police bail.

Call police on 01622 654852, or Crimestoppers on 0800 555111.

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Mandarin lessons boost for toddlers

By **JILL HURST**

jill.hurst@kosmedia.co.uk

CHILDREN as young as two years old are being taught to speak Mandarin at a nursery.

Little Learners, based in Loose, Maidstone, is providing Chinese language tuition to 17 children aged between two and five.

Manager Hayley Oliver said the choice of language was based on the growing need for Chinese speakers from the western world combined with an interesting and vibrant culture.

"China is one of the fastest growing economies in the world and will play a big part in the future lives of our children," she said.

"Many schools offer German, French or Spanish, but we feel Mandarin has a lot to offer.

"It's important for children to speak a second language and the younger they start, the easier it is to pick up. At nursery age children's brains are like a sponge, ready to soak everything up."

A native Mandarin speaker visits the nursery for two hours each week, making use of an array of visual props and aids to stimulate the children's interest.

Mrs Oliver said: "We use all sorts of visual aids including posters, teddies, books and an abacus to help them to learn to count."

According to Mrs Oliver, most of the chil-



EARLY START: Pupils are also learning about Chinese culture

children already have the basics including counting to six and saying 'hello' and 'goodbye'.

The nursery has also embraced the Chinese culture, celebrating New Year and the country's zodiac system, which relates each year to an animal.

Mrs Oliver, a former teacher, says the lessons will prove invaluable to the children when they progress through the New Line Learning Academy, which features Mandarin on its teaching syllabus.

China is now home to one of the world's most important economies and more people speak Chinese than any other language in the world.

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LETTERS

LETTER OF THE WEEK

Sickened by free lunches

I was incensed to read that Kent's county councillors had voted to retain their free lunches during full council meetings, at a cost of £12.50 a head.

This costs a total of £1,050 for each meeting, or £7,350 for the seven meetings held in a year. They say the freebies are crucial to the "social atmosphere" of their meetings. This is at a time when they will be making budget cuts of millions of pounds and axing 1,500 jobs.

I find it disgusting that they feel they are justified in spending an amount on seven days' lunches. That is more than a lot of pensioners have to live on for a year.

To say that it is crucial to the social atmosphere is an insult to council taxpayers. We are not paying for them to socialise, but to provide good services for the best value. The story also says councillors already get an allowance to cover meals, so surely they should pay for their own lunches out of that.

W Mayes, Queenborough

Party to show Kentish pride

The day of the royal wedding, April 29, is a public holiday and there will be no school that day.

The weather should be warm enough for street celebrations.

This is a once-in-a-generation event. The entire length of Kent's pedestrianised streets should be given over to parties.

It will be fun for the children, but also a wonderful opportunity to publicise tourist sites, attract visitors and sell goods on the day. We could get children up to the age of 13 seated, and older children can serve the younger ones. For this to work, there will need to be sponsors to donate food and drinks; organisations to lend chairs and tables; volunteers to organise; buses to be diverted; parking to be laid on.

All local politicians and organisations should pull together on this one. Get a street party licence and forge ahead with it.

Let's show the country what Kent can do. As a boy who waved a Union flag at the Queen on Coronation Day, I would like this very much.

Geoffrey Clark, secretary Ukip, Dartford and Gravesham

Charity should begin at home

When will our leaders face up to the fact that with all the cuts we are having to endure we will soon be poorer than the countries we give foreign aid to.

It's about time somebody in the Government realised that if we stopped foreign aid for a year Britain would be out of debt. Why do we have to suffer? Surely looking after one's own country should be the first priority? I don't think anybody could argue against that.

John R O'Neon, by email

OPINION: BUOYED BY THE FIGHTBACK

UK Independence Party leader **NIGEL FARAGE** says EU fishing policy is still dead in the water, despite the promised changes on scandalous 'discards'

ONE of the greatest betrayals on joining the EEC in 1973 was towards the British fishing industry. Our fishermen, over the years, have had to cope with a quota system arbitrarily imposed by Brussels in the name of 'conservation'.

The European Union's own estimate is that 40 per cent of all fish caught is dumped – dead – back into the sea. Over a million tonnes a year of fish wasted, while across the world we have starvation and in this country we have a fishing industry on the brink of destruction.

From a traditional, buoyant and healthy industry managing some of the richest fishing grounds in the world, UK fishing and associated industries have been devastated by the EU's Common Fisheries Policy; its fishing fleets deliberately and methodically destroyed, its ports and related support structures turned into ghost ports, with British coastal waters now just part of the 'common' waters. We can map this decline in Kent with our own once-thriving fishing towns of Dover, Folkestone, Dungeness and Ramsgate among the many whose townsfolk relied on the sea.

British fishermen numbered in the tens of thousands in the 1960s, but by 2007 the UK only had 13,000 left. This has continued to decline. On top of this, the policy has added £200 a year to the family food bill which, at a time of cuts and austerity, is shameful.

Even the European Commission admits the CFP has failed. Eighty-eight per cent of fish stocks are overfished, while 30 per cent are outside safe biological limits, meaning they cannot reproduce as normal.

Following the Hugh's Fish Fight campaign by TV chef Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall, aimed at ending 'discards', the EC called a meeting of fisheries ministers to announce a series of changes. I attended this meeting to listen to the proposals on a topic on which I have been campaigning for more

than a decade. Before the meeting, the British minister, Richard Benyon, told me he assumed we'd be on the same side. I had to disagree – I don't think it is the place of a Greek politician, fisheries commissioner Maria Damanaki, to make laws on our national resources.

Every year, rounds of horse-trading take place in Brussels to decide fishing quotas. These are being reduced year-on-year, resulting in a situation where some fishermen, particularly those who operate smaller boats, cannot make a living.

Of course I'm delighted that after 28 years we may see an end to discards. The fact that we have been throwing millions of tonnes of fish back into the sea is an outrage. As one of the million anglers in the UK, I have been appalled at not only the impact on the environment but on our fishing industry and the damage wreaked on it by civil servants ignorant of this way of life. But for those who think this change will be a quick one, or one which will instantly breathe life into our beleaguered fishing industry, I'm afraid I don't share that confidence.

Hugh himself said that British fishermen will "feel the pinch". This may well have been the case if the industry was thriving, but in 2011 it's almost dead in the water. Rather than this gradual approach to ending discards and quotas, Ukip favours abandoning all quotas and strictly forbidding discards. We should follow the example of the Norwegians, who fish their own waters without discards by managing fishing effort.

Despite all-party criticism of the CFP, Ukip is the only party with the opportunity to restore British fishing to its former glory in a meaningful and practical manner.

The UK is in a prime location for creating some of the finest fishing grounds in Europe, if not the world. If managed correctly, these will last for ever, but I fear it will take more than a celebrity campaign and politicians motivated by spin to take the action needed to ensure we don't sound the final toll for the fishing industry in this country. For Kent, with its rich history, it will breathe new life into our communities.

• **Ukip leader Nigel Farage is a South East MEP. He lives in Westerham, near Sevenoaks.**



Lecturing on the merits of action

THE threat of strike action by workers from a variety of professions is yet further proof of what a sorry state our economy is in.

Post Office counter staff and lecturers at the University of Kent are the latest to voice their support for industrial action and it's likely the police would join them too, if they were allowed.

And while workers from different professions all have their own reasons for wanting to go on strike, it has become quite clear that money – or rather the lack of it – is the root of all evil as far as they are concerned.

In regards to the lecturers in particular, these must be surreal times.

As opposed to when postmen or rubbish collectors go on strike, only a small percentage of the population – students – are actually affected by anything university lecturers do.

Therefore they have little option but to target the very people they have devoted their lives to helping.

It can be easy to criticise union representatives for downing tools when they don't get their own way, but we all have our own reasons for making a stand against things that affect us personally.

There are likely to be many strikes, marches and rallies over the next few months and years, but only time will tell if any of them make a blind bit of difference.

Extra holiday match made in ale heaven

NOT only have we gained an extra bank holiday from the wedding of Prince William and Kate Middleton, we now have a new drink to enjoy as well.

Moodley's Royal Match – described as an "elegant and tasteful" beer that reflects the characteristics of the happy couple – will go down well on a warm April afternoon.

But whether anyone will care – or even remember – what they are drinking by the end of the party is something else entirely.

Riposte to your glorified writer

I was dismayed by your Comment regarding supply teachers (March 6).

Supply staff may be expensive to a school, but very few people realise the amount of pay for a supply teacher is based on a regular teacher's annual salary and they would only receive the same amount if they worked every school day.

So far this tax year, I have earned £9,000, having been available for employment every working day.

Supply work is definitely drying up as schools increasingly use unqualified staff to teach children.

How many parents realise their children are being taught by teaching assistants and cover supervisors?

I believe the latter may be the "glorified babysitters" you refer to. I can certainly understand that teaching assistants obvi-

ously know the children and the curriculum, but they are not qualified teachers.

Supply teachers, as many pupils and parents do not realise, are fully qualified teachers, who have held permanent teaching positions in schools, sometimes for many years, as in my experience.

"In these tough economic times" as you write, it does not help to denigrate someone who is struggling to make a living and after years of teaching to be called a "glorified babysitter".

Name and address supplied

Bank on more trouble ahead

Chancellor George Osborne's statement that he is going to set up 10 enterprise zones in the North and the Midlands to stimulate growth is truly an admission that his present economic policies are an abject failure.

Ten zones north of London may just, in part, help those 10 areas

but will certainly confine the rest of the country and undoubtedly Folkestone, to recession or even worse.

Here in Folkestone we have had Tory or Lib Dem run councils for decades, but enterprise is the last thing they have helped generate. Far from growth, we have had decline upon decline and now in certain wards of the town have rapidly rising joblessness, with 25 per cent youth unemployment on top.

Margaret Thatcher and John Major – with their mace-wielding hero Michael 'Tarzan' Hestletine – set up 38 enterprise zones between 1981 and 1996, yet we still had three million unemployed, 15 per cent inflation and a decimated manufacturing base under the Tories.

Mr Osborne is just repeating the same old failed window dressing of the past.

Sure, the Chancellor has stated that we should never again rely upon the banks and financial services to grow the economy, but that in itself flies in the face of his own Governor of the Bank of England, Mervyn King, who on the very same day let the cat out of the bag

and warned of a second banking crisis in the UK unless the banks are reformed and stopped from putting profits and bonuses before people and industry.

Something this Government has patently failed to do.

We must though give the Chancellor credit for promising to reform the planning laws in the Enterprise Zones to allow speedier decisions for commerce and industry and to encourage entrepreneurs to invest without the risk of being tied up in lengthy and highly expensive local planning inquiries.

Pity this message did not get through to his colleagues in Cabinet responsible for calling in the Lydd airport planning application now costing us all millions in legal fees, council tax and lost opportunities.

Then Folkestone and Shepway are never destined to be enterprise zones under a Coalition Government that would rather preserve the district as a retirement zone for the gentilefolk of the Big Society than as an area of growth and prosperity for our children and generations to come.

Donald Worsley, Folkestone



BIRTHS, MARRIAGES AND DEATHS

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BIRTHS

CAMBURN

Paul and Philippa of Herne Bay are delighted to announce the safe arrival of their beautiful daughter, Isabelle Jean Camburn. Isabelle was born on 21st February weighing 7lb 13oz.

GUNAGANTI

Malarvizhi and Srihari Gunaganti celebrate the birth of their daughter Teja Sri on 20th February 2011.

HASKER

Lyndsey and Neil of Ramsgate are delighted to announce the birth of their son Finley Sean Robert Hasker, born on 10th February 2011 at

QEQM, Margate. Our most beautiful and precious son.

HAWKINS

Andrew and Jenny of Kings Hill are overjoyed to announce the birth of their second son, Nathaniel Adam, born on 26th February 2011. A new brother for Edward.

HIRST

Ryan Leslie, born on 24th February 2011 weighing 6lb 6.5oz. A beautiful son to Richard and Dawn Hirst of Folkestone.

HORGAN

Faith born on the 7th February 2011, weighing 7lb 14oz. Daughter to Daniel and Jolie of Folkestone.

RIGDEN

John Rigden and Maxine Horvath of Folkestone are delighted to announce the arrival of Chloe Louise at 2:14am on 24th February 2011, weighing in at just 7lb 5oz. A beautiful baby sister for Skye.

DEATHS

BARROWCLIFFE

Peter Barrowcliffe, formerly of Ramsgate, passed away on 26th February 2011, aged 63. Thank you to those who cared for him.

FALCONER

Vera Falconer passed away peacefully at EllenorLions Hospice,

Northfleet, on Tuesday 1st March aged 69 years. A much loved wife, mum, sister, grandma and friend who will be very sadly missed by all. Funeral service to take place at Eltham Crematorium on 18th March at 3.30pm. Family flowers only and donations if desired to EllenorLions Hospice.

HAYES

Joan Betty Hayes of Deal passed away peacefully on 22nd February 2011. A much loved mum, grandmother and great grandmother who will be sadly missed. The funeral was held on 8th February at Barham Crematorium.

problems, they start looking to make a name for themselves abroad.

So the Archbishop of Canterbury ignores his decaying Church and tries to interfere in matters that are not really his concern.

Thanks to the continual dilution of Christ's message, the adoption of pagan teachings and the desire to do man's will rather than God's, Dr Rowan Williams has not only assisted the drift towards a more secular and soon to be Godless society, but presides over a Church which is crumbling beneath him, as his bishops leave for what they think are greener pastures.

He should be attending to the spiritual dearth in his Church as his flocks become, "skinned and thrown about like sheep without a shepherd" [Matthew 9:36].

He should be more concerned at his lack of defence of the Christian faith, which is under attack as it has never been before, as more and more Christians are persecuted for their beliefs.

Instead, he does anything other than reinforce Christ's teachings, anything other than teach Biblical truths, anything other than give a spiritual lead in a very spiritually dark world. He is neither one thing or another, and as God said in Revelation 3:15-16, "Because you are lukewarm and neither hot nor cold, I am going to vomit you out of my mouth". His Church cannot stand.

Phil Granger, West Malling

soak up the rain. Now it stays on the surface, accumulates and floods housing. So once again in this argument we are back to the real problem of overpopulation.

Phil Granger, West Malling

Animal lovers can play a vital role

We're calling on readers to lend a hand at the RSPCA. The Kent West, Ashford and Dover, branches are searching for the volunteer stars of the future to help out with tasks, which go much further than dog walking and cat cuddling.

We are looking for people who can help out with all aspects of the charity's operation at a local level ranging from fundraising, assisting in the shops and customer service and having a say in key decisions as a branch trustee.

We hope that these opportunities will benefit the volunteers as well. Many of the tasks we need help with could help people struggling to find work to gain employment, or give school leavers and recent graduates that all-important work experience.

The RSPCA is a charity and receives no Government funding. It relies on members of the public to continue encouraging kindness and preventing cruelty to animals.

Experience is not necessary for many of the tasks, so whatever your forte, there should be something for you.

If your readers are interested in getting involved, they can contact the RSPCA enquiries team on 0300 1234 555, log on to www.rspca.org.uk or contact their local branch.

Liz Sheppee, branch operations manager, RSPCA

Reforms overlook autism needs

As a supporter of the National Autistic Society living in the area, I am extremely concerned about the Government's Disability Living Allowance (DLA) reforms.

The reforms mean people with autism will have to undergo a stringent face-to-face assessment to claim this vital benefit. Autism is a 'hidden' disability and unless assessors have specific training in the condition, it is very likely the needs of people with autism will be misunderstood or overlooked.

I would like to appeal to our local MP to bring this issue to parliament in line with the National Autistic Society's Who Benefits? campaign, which puts forward the following four points aimed at protecting society's most vulnerable:

- People shouldn't have to go through a face-to-face assessment if they already have sufficient evidence about their autism from previous assessments
- People with autism experience a variety of difficulties with daily life. The Government must make sure that these are reflected in the new assessment.
- Assessors must be trained so that they understand autism and how to talk to someone with autism, and can make a fair assessment of that person's needs
- The Government must not abolish the mobility component of DLA for people living in residential care.

I urge others in the area to take action now, by visiting www.autism.org.uk/whobenefits.

Isabelle Owen, Headcorn

Throwing good money after bad

I am appalled to read of Kent County Council's bid for £10m to the Regional Growth Fund, to support the construction of a rail station at Thanet Parkway, with the support of Roger Gale, one of our MPs.

This would subsidise a commercial airline operator to encourage it to fly from Manston airport to Europe.

A number of things trouble me about this: Far from being transparent, KCC is unwilling to release any details about this bid for public money to support a private company (and a company, moreover, that pays its taxes in New Zealand). Surely this is against the Conservative's public policy of more transparency in government?

A few years ago KCC headed a group of

investors (almost all public sector) in a misguided attempt to boost business at Manston by subsidising flights to Virginia. In months, £200,000 was lost – almost all of it public money. KCC also invested in the previous owner of Manston, Planestation, and lost that public money too, when the company went into liquidation.

The Audit Commission criticised KCC for its ill-considered attempt to boost Manston by using public funds.

This current bid would be a classic case of throwing more public money away.

Market economics suggest that, if a commercial airline operator has to be subsidised to be tempted to fly from Manston, the route is not commercially viable without a subsidy. Airline operators are not daft – they fight for the routes that will make money and shun the rest. Manston has been in commercial ownership for 11 years and still has just two passenger flights a day.

A rail station at Thanet Parkway will make only a very marginal difference to the airport's accessibility and will not be enough to turn this loss-making business into a thriving regional airport.

Local people fear the grand plan is to build Thanet Parkway rail station in the middle of nowhere and then close Ramsgate rail station (and possibly two others) so that people who want to travel by train to London have to drive to a station rather than walk, as they do now. This is a retrograde step when we are supposed to be cutting emissions.

An unsuccessful Thanet Parkway station would lend itself to becoming another out-of-town shopping centre. In an era when we're worried about the UK's food security, this would be a poor swap for prime Kent farmland.

KCC has already said in its Local Transport Plan that it is not viable in the current economic climate to speed up the rail line from Thanet to London. If this is the case, then investing millions exploring Thanet Parkway is a complete waste of money, as KCC cannot afford to see the project through in the next five years.

What I would like to know – will KCC's past investment failures be taken into account when this £10m is considered?

Carole Russell, Ramsgate

Archbishop needs to defend his faith

Famously, when politicians lose their grip on their own countries and have no answers to its

People know best on EU, Cameron

Just how long can David Cameron ignore the people on the subject of the EU, after telling everyone to listen to the people?

It's quite possible the people of this country are a lot wiser than this government and can see all the disadvantages of belonging to this club, and very few of the benefits.

This country does not belong to Cameron or this government. It belongs to the people they are supposed to represent.

Going to the voting booth to put them in Westminster must be some sort of a joke, as David Cameron is no more than a caretaker passing on the EU rules and regulations.

Since Ted Heath, less and less of this country is being governed by Parliament and more and more by the unelected crowd in Brussels.

Just in case Mr Cameron has not got the message: "We want our country back." It is not down to him alone to decide on such an important issue.

Quite often we see war graves on television and I have to wonder why all those people died for our freedom when someone comes along and sells us down the river. That is an insult to all of those people, and not letting us have a say in staying or leaving the EU is an insult to the whole country.

He promised, amongst the many promises he has broken, some sort of a referendum about Europe, but the only promise he has kept so far is the one he made to Nick Clegg and that is one the country does not want.

RE Tucker, Sheerness

Flooding caused by overpopulation

Here we go again. Steve Dawe of Kent Green Party belongs to the school that believes if you repeat anything enough times, it must make it true.

The latest is that recent flooding provides conclusive irrefutable proof of man-made global warming. Never mind that flooding occurred before the Industrial Revolution, before the world was so overpopulated and even covered the whole earth during the time of Noah, thousands of years ago.

The main contribution we have made to flooding is the concreting and asphaltting over of vast areas of land that once used to

Check the rules on campaigning

On Thursday, May 5, voters will decide who represents them in local elections across England. There will also be a referendum on whether we use the 'first past the post' or 'alternative vote' system to elect MPs to the UK Parliament. Many of your readers will want to get involved in campaigning in the referendum and elections.

This could be by setting up a campaign group, standing as a candidate or starting a political party.

Anyone who wants to get involved should be aware that there are rules. These are set out at www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance and I'd encourage everyone hoping to play an active role in the campaigns to check the rules.

Peter Wardle, chief executive, Electoral Commission

Charity runners' Olympic chance

World Cancer Research Fund is inviting charity runners to run the 2012 Olympic Marathon route in a 10K race.

While raising money for vital cancer prevention research and education work, entrants will be able to take in the sights of next year's Olympic event including Parliament, Westminster Abbey, St Paul's, Trafalgar Square and Buckingham Palace.

There is no entry fee to race for WCRF on May 30, all you have to do is raise £200 in sponsorship.

Runners will get the full support of a dedicated member of WCRF's Events Team; training and nutrition advice; essential kit, including your unique vest; a fundraising pack and your own online sponsorship page.

Call 020 7343 4200 or visit www.wcrf-uk.org/signup to join.

Sian Fraser, events fundraiser, WCRF



A second bite at success

BURGER chain McDonald's is celebrating the success of 45 employees who recently completed the company's apprenticeship scheme.

Awarded a 'good' rating by the education watchdog Ofsted, the programme provides job-specific skills in customer service, teamwork and communications, and is equivalent to five GCSEs.

The apprenticeship scheme sits in the middle of the fast-food giant's learning ladder, which ranges from work experience for schoolchildren to a foundation degree in managing business operations.

Sherri Frier, 21, from Canterbury, was among the first to complete the qualification.

She said: "McDonald's has made learning accessible, not only by providing a course that varies between academic and practical studying but also by allowing you to earn while you learn."

"The apprenticeship is the second chance at education I never thought I would have. In five years' time I would like to be in a management position with the company as I love my job at McDonald's."

"The scheme has been a huge step towards achieving my goals and giving me the confidence to believe I can progress as far as I want to with hard work and commitment."

Almost 3,000 McDonald's staff from across the UK have already completed an apprenticeship with the company, while more than 7,000 are currently working towards achieving the qualification.

Nationally recognised and accredited by City and Guilds, it provides employees with transferable skills they can use in their future career.

Franchisee Paul Crocker, who runs a number of McDonald's restaurants in Kent, said: "The education landscape in the UK is evolving in the midst of the changing economic climate."

"As a result, vocational qualifications are more relevant than ever since they provide people with the opportunity to continue gaining qualifications at the same time as working in a relevant employment sector."

Constructive career path opens for Kelli

By **STEVE KNIGHT**

steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk

FEMALE workers are being urged not to miss out on an expected explosion in the number of available construction jobs in the South East.

Despite the current high jobless figures in the region, construction employment is forecast to reach 395,740 in 2015, with an average rate of 5,440 new workers needed every

year. According to CITB-ConstructionSkills, this shows that there is a wealth of opportunities available to women in Kent.

The charity is now encouraging the fairer sex to follow in the footsteps of people like Kelli Randall, from Gillingham, who is an apprentice engineer technician at Skanska UK.

The 19-year-old is working towards a diploma in civil engineering and an NVQ in site technical support.

"I first got interested in civil engineering in sixth form at school and haven't looked back since," she said.



RISING PROSPECTS: Kelli Randall is urging other women to follow her into construction

"My job is varied and hugely fulfilling, and I would urge other women to consider a career in construction if they haven't already. No two days are the same and there are new challenges every day, which is why I enjoy my job so much."

"Although the industry is male-dominated, everyone is so nice I tend not to notice I am working with men most of the time."

"Having said that, my current project manager is a woman and is a real source of inspiration as I look to the future and developing my career."

The appeal for more women workers forms part of CITB-ConstructionSkills' Positive Image campaign, which aims to ensure there is a fresh supply of talent to the industry to help avert a retirement timebomb.

It was launched to coincide with International Women's Day on Tuesday.

Gillian Cain, regional delivery manager for the South East, said enthusiastic recruits to the construction industry will ensure companies have the skills they need to survive.

She added: "Kelli is just one of the many women who are helping to make construction and the built environment a diverse and successful industry."

"Although women and ethnic minorities are increasingly drawn to construction, they are still under-represented so we are urging them to get in touch to find out about the huge range of careers and routes into the industry available to them."

"Today's employers are looking to recruit from a much wider pool of talent, so now really is the time for more women to get involved and reap the benefits."

Visit www.cskills.org or call 0300 456 5824 for more information.

WHAT is your business doing to help Keep Kent Working?

Are you running an apprenticeship scheme to attract young workers? Are your employees being sent on training courses to aid their personal development? Or are you funding a university scholarship to help find the businessmen and women of the future?

Send your good news stories to steve.knight@kosmedia.co.uk or call 01303 817136.

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Inspiring project is setting the stage for musical youth

A YOUTH training project aimed at inspiring young people through music is staging monthly gigs in Maidstone.

Training Them Live (TTL) is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to providing its clients with the life skills required to aid their transition into further education and employment.

Last month it staged its first gig at the Babylon Live Lounge in King Street, Maidstone, with future shows planned for the first Sunday of every month.

TTL chairman Chris Ellen said: "Our project has been running for the last six years and is strongly supported by Medway Council, Kent Police, and local businesses and business partnerships.

"Training Them Live provides a youth engagement strategy through its music projects, which helps give bored youngsters places to go and keeps them out of harm's way. We are also able to provide them with valuable life-skill building blocks which help to support them in fur-

ther education and employment."

Among the skills taught to youths involved in the project include how to work both on stage and in the studio, and how to improve with their instruments of choice. Money raised from the gigs is donated to the Sittingbourne-based charity Demelza Hospice Care for Children.

Babylon Live Lounge owner Kirit Velani said: "We contacted Training Them Live having heard about their rock schools and the work they do in providing acts and event management for the Under Siege concerts at Rochester Castle.

"We've opened our doors to give musicians a chance to play in a real music venue, using and learning from all of our lighting and sound equipment."

The Sunday Night Live gigs are held over two floors, each with their own type of music, between 3-10pm on the first Sunday of every month.

Admission is £3 on the door. For more information, visit www.ttlgigs.co.uk.

Shelley's four-day forum



AMBITIOUS: Centre manager Shelley Filippi

A SHOPPING centre manager has won a place on a prestigious four-day retail training course, worth £2,000.

Shelley Filippi, who works for the Cushman & Wakefield real estate firm in Swanley, will join other senior figures at the Oxford Retail Masters Forum, running from March 28-31.

As well as hosting seminars with guest speakers, the course invites attendees to explore such issues as global sourcing, ethical trading, business management and climate change.

Shelley said: "As a shopping centre manager, I hope the forum will give me a better understanding of retailers' needs at a higher level.

"I want to expand and advance my career in retail but I know I need to get up to speed with the industry language and trends, and attending the course will help me achieve this."

The scholarship was joint-funded by Skillsmart Retail, the Sector Skills Council for Retail, and the Retail Trust.

Learning support sessions

KENT Adult Education is running courses for people hoping to enter the field of learning support.

Level one introduction sessions are being offered across the county from next month, with potential students advised to visit www.kent.gov.uk/adulted or call 0845 606 5606 for more information on how to enrol.

The organisation is highlighting the story

of one of its former learners, Satvinder from Gravesend, who gained recognised literacy and numeracy qualifications with Kent Adult Education so she could land a part-time job at a local school.

Her employers were so impressed with her skills and dedication they promoted her to a teaching assistant role and are currently supporting her full teacher training.

Professional Development Courses

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For more information, please contact the
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Or email jason.pyne@kosmedia.co.uk

ARCHANT KOS MEDIA

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The closing date for applications is Friday 25th March 2011

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Must be experienced in tyre fitting, essential.
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Location:
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For more information please contact
 Toby Woods/Gary Matthews
 Tel: 01233 503006 or email: sales@rimstyle.com

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We are currently seeking dedicated Carer Support Workers (bank) to join our team to work with clients of all ages providing Carers with that all important Carers Break. We work on a flexible roster and you will be required to work some evenings and some weekends.

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The ideal candidate should be comfortable with all stages of client relationship management and should be proficient at sourcing leads, securing new revenue, delivering presentations, writing proposals, negotiating and closing.

The person we are seeking will be an energetic and enthusiastic individual with excellent sales skills, a self starter; tenacious and will have excellent verbal and written communication ability. You will need to demonstrate a proven sales track record, preferably from within media (although this is not essential,) will have a good understanding of the benefits of printed, online and live media. Knowledge of the Kent marketplace would be beneficial.

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You will play a key role in selling advertising across our market leading portfolio of newspapers, websites and mobile products. Candidates should possess a track record in telephone sales, combining excellent communication skills, tenacity and the ability to build relationships. Ideally you will have a media sales background, although this is not essential as full training and support is provided.

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You will ideally have a recruitment agency background, possess a track record in telephone sales and negotiation, be well organised and combine excellent communication skills, tenacity and the ability to build relationships. Ultimately, we need an articulate and assured recruitment professional.

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Please apply in writing with your CV and covering letter in the first instance to:

Ynez Coton, Commercial Director,
ARCHANT KOS MEDIA
Apple Barn, Hythe Rd, Smeeth, Ashford Kent. TN25 6SS
Or email ynez.coton@kosmedia.co.uk

Senior reporter

Archant KOS Media is looking for an experienced, enthusiastic, self-starter in a rare opportunity to join our senior reporting team. Providing balanced, insightful, engaging copy week in, week out for our award-winning weekend titles Kent on Sunday and Kent on Saturday. As well as our midweek e-editions and websites, the role is demanding but richly rewarding.

You will have worked as a senior reporter within the local or national press or have recently passed your NCE exams and will be prepared to take an integral, responsible, role within a friendly newsroom. You will be capable of bringing in off-diary exclusives and be full of ideas.

Salary is competitive.

Junior reporter

Archant KOS Media is seeking a junior reporter, in a rare opportunity to join its editorial team. Ideally you will have taken your NCE preliminary exams, but training will be provided.

You must be highly motivated, have a determination to learn quickly and succeed, and be prepared to play a key role in a friendly newsroom. You must not be shy of responsibility and have gained some experience within the local newspaper industry.

Serving our weekend titles, Kent on Sunday and Kent on Saturday, you will also work for our midweek e-editions and our websites. The role will require hard work, bags of energy, enthusiasm, and a real love of local newspapers and serving our loyal readers.

Send a CV and covering letter to:

Chris Britcher, Editor (News)
ARCHANT KOS MEDIA,
Apple Barn, Hythe Road,
Smeeth, Ashford, Kent TN25 6SS
Or email: chris.britcher@kosmedia.co.uk

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Shepway is a coastal district undergoing a transformation through a range of public and private sector initiatives. To complement this activity, the district is keen to ensure that the urban environment across all its towns is improved. As such, a new post has been created within the Economic Regeneration Team to tackle townscape issues. Your role will be to develop a Townscape Improvement Strategy for the district in collaboration with partner organisations and implement it through a wide range of initiatives. Application details on this exciting new position can be accessed via www.shepway.gov.uk or alternatively if you would like to discuss this post, please contact Jeremy Whittaker, Economic Regeneration Team Leader on 01303 853375. The closing date for applications is 4 March 2011. Provisional Interview date is 18 March 2011.
To apply/more information: Shepway District Council jobs@shepway.gov.uk
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Data Entry Clerks needed in our Clients Offices in Canterbury / Maidstone / Dover to enter data onto a database. Data Entry Skills required. Will also be answering calls from businesses / companies and checking emails. We are an Data Processing Company with Offices throughout the UK.
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Closing date for applications: 18th March 2011Interviews to be

held: week commencing 28th March 2011We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. As part of this process, all successful candidates will be required to apply for an enhanced CRB disclosure.
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Quoting Job Ref: kos

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The Folkestone School for Girls
Salary Mainscale
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To apply/more information: Bluebird Care canterbury@bluebirdcare.co.uk
Quoting Job Ref: kos

TROWEL TRADES TECHNICIAN

Broadstairs
Salary £7,990-£8,896
To apply/more information: Thanet College personnel@thanet.ac.uk
Quoting Job Ref: TTT001

TEACHER OF FRENCH

Tonbridge
Salary Negotiable
TEACHER OF FRENCHFULL TIME Required for September 2011We are seeking to appoint an enthusiastic Teacher of French. The successful candidate will be delivering GCSE French as part of our English Baccalaureate. Hugh Christie Technology College is a good school with outstanding features. Located in a total new build, the school has a national and international reputation for the use of technology and curriculum innovation. For further information contact Jenny Rutherford jrutherford@hughchristie.kent.sch.uk
Closing date for applications: 18th March 2011Interviews to be held: week commencing 28th March 2011We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the

welfare of children. As part of this process, all successful candidates will be required to apply for an enhanced CRB disclosure.

To apply/more information: Hugh Christie Technology College jrutherford@hughchristie.kent.sch.uk
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SUPPORT WORKERS Required To assist in the provision of complete range of social physical and personal care to adults with learning and physical disabilities, with the aim to enhance their independence in all areas. Position part-time. Varied hours. Need to drive due to rural location in between Sittingbourne and Faversham. For more information contact Sally BrooksTel: 01795 886220 or email: ellenscourt@btconnect.com
To apply/more information: Country Care ellenscourt@btconnect.com
Quoting Job Ref: kos

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We were fortunate to be in the last wave of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, which was the biggest single government investment in improving school buildings for over 50 years. Our new-build school, which opened fully in September 2010 is state-of-the-art, and designed to motivate and engage our learners. Candidates are very welcome to visit the school. Please call to make arrangements.

If you think these roles sound exciting, Please contact: 01474 566552 ext 8081120 or email k.allen@thamesview.kent.sch.uk for further information.

CVs without an application form will not be accepted.

Closing Date: Monday 14th March 2011.

Interviews: Week Commencing Monday 21st March 2011.

Successful candidates will be invited for interview at the school and our recommendations will then be passed to Canterbury Christ Church University. The University will then select candidates for further interview.

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.

Appointment to this post will require an Enhanced Disclosure via the Criminal Records Bureau.

Thamesview School operates a non-smoking policy.



with Business and Enterprise status
Headteacher:
Rhianon Hughes NB.Ed. Hons

TEACHER OF HAIRDRESSING (Maternity Cover)

Required for an immediate start
Salary – Unqualified Teachers Scale

Are you:

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- Looking to join a strong, supportive and forward thinking vocational team?
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This is an excellent opportunity to develop your teaching skills and to be part of many new initiatives started by our outstanding vocational team. Flexible working hours will be required.

Thamesview is an 11-16 non-selective Foundation High School. It is located in a pleasant area of Gravesend surrounded by open space and farmland with views of the River Thames to the north east, close to London and with easy access to airports, Ebbsfleet International Station and the Channel Tunnel.

We were fortunate to be in the last wave of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, which was the biggest single government investment in improving school buildings for over 50 years. Our new-build school, which opened fully in September 2010 is state-of-the-art, and designed to motivate and engage our learners. Candidates are very welcome to visit the school. Please call to make arrangements.

If you think this role sounds exciting, Please contact: 01474 566552 ext 8081120 or email k.allen@thamesview.kent.sch.uk for further information.

Closing Date: 14th March 2011

Interviews: Week commencing 21st March 2011

We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students.

Appointment to this post will require an Enhanced Disclosure via the Criminal Records Bureau.

Thamesview School operates a non-smoking policy.



Rainham School for Girls

(A Specialist Technology College & Training School)
Derwent Way, Rainham
GILLINGHAM Kent ME8 0BX
(NOR 1532)

Head Teacher: Ms K Roberts

Full Time Caretaker

Required from 1st April 2011 37 hours per week. Salary £15,039 - £16,440 plus regular overtime (one regular evening per week and on call one weekend in four)

Rainham School for Girls represents a culture of high aspiration, high expectation and success. Our aim is to provide an outstanding learning experience for all students within a safe, disciplined and caring environment.

Any offer of employment for this post will be subject to a satisfactory Enhanced Criminal Record Bureau Disclosure.

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Application forms and further details are available from Mrs P Collins, PA to the Headteacher. Tel. 01634 362746, Fax: 01634 388334. email: pcollins@rsg.org.uk

Closing date: Thursday 17th March 2011

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HIGHWAYS

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Ashford

HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 – SECTION 116
STOPPING UP OF LAND AT SIMONE WEIL AVENUE, ASHFORD

I am giving notice that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL propose to make an application to the Magistrates sitting at Sittingbourne Magistrates Court on Monday 18 April 2011 at 10:00am for an Order under Section 116 of the Highways Act 1980 to extinguish highways rights on the grounds that they are unnecessary on land at Simone Weil Avenue, Ashford, as shown in red on the plan on deposit.

A copy of this notice and the plan referred to are on deposit, and can be seen during normal office hours, at the main reception at Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, Kent. ME14 1XQ.

If you require further information or would like to discuss this matter, please contact John Farmer of Kent Highway Services in writing at the address given below, or by telephone on 08458 247800 (24 hour contact centre) or by e-mail to john.farmer@kent.gov.uk

HIGHWAYS - District of Dover

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(ALKHAM VALLEY ROAD, DRELLINGORE, DOVER)
(50 MPH SPEED LIMIT) ORDER 2011

NOTICE is hereby given that the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes to make the above named Order under section 84(1), (2) of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, (hereinafter called “the Act”) and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with paragraph 20 of Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act,

The effect of the Order will extend the existing 50 mph speed limit. The length of road described below encompasses the existing length of 50 mph speed limit and the proposed new length of 50 mph speed limit.

Name of Road	Length of Road
Alkham Valley Road	From the junction with Lockering Lane to a point 125 metres north east of the junction with Hockley Sole Lane

Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Dover District Council, White Cliffs Business Park, Dover and Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing to the Transport and Development Team Leader, Kent Highway Services, Javelin Way, Ashford, TN24 8AD or by email to td.eastkent@kent.gov.uk by noon on Monday 4 April 2011.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Gravesham

HENLEY STREET, LUDESSESDOWNE - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Henley Street, Luddesdowne for the entire length.

The Order will become effective on 28th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 3 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Sole Street, The Street Cobham, Cobhambury Road, Luddesdown Road

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate soak away cleansing.

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, GRAVESHAM) (WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT NO 7) ORDER 2010

NOTICE is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL has made the above named Order under sections 1(1), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), and 124 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The effect of the Order will be to introduce parking bays on the southern side of Cross Lane East, Gravesend on the length fronting Nos 1 Echo Square westwards to include Echo Court.

The Order was sealed on 9 March 2011 and will come into force 14 March 2011.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended and a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays Gravesham

Borough Council Offices, Civic Centre, Gravesham and at Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made there under have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Maidstone

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, FANT, MAIDSTONE)
(WIDTH LIMIT) ORDER 2011

NOTICE is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL proposes to make the above named Order under Sections 1(1) and (2), 2(1) to 3, 3(2) and 4) and part IV of Schedule 9 section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

The Order will prohibit any vehicle the width of which, inclusive of any load on the vehicle, exceeds 6 feet 6 inches, except for access, to proceed on the following length of road, subject to exemptions for emergency services, maintenance, etc. and statutory undertakers carrying out work on the affected length of the road. Any vehicle authorised by the Highway Authority will also be exempt from the proposed Order.

Lengths of road

Bower Lane	Entire length
Hever Gardens	Entire length
Bower Place	Entire length
Orchard Place	Entire length
Evelyn Road	Entire length
Newton Close	Entire length

Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Maidstone Borough Council Offices, Maidstone House, King Street, Maidstone and Sessions House County Hall, Maidstone, during normal opening times.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed Order you should send the grounds in writing for the attention of Network Performance Team, 1st Floor Invicta House, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX by noon on Monday 4 April 2011.

HIGHWAYS - District of Sevenoaks

VARIOUS ROADS, WEST KINGSDOWN - (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

NOTICE is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst an event is carried out on or near the highway the KENT COUNTY COUNCIL intends to make an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Various Roads, West Kingsdown as noted in schedule 1.

The Order will become effective on 28th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the event is planned to last as noted in the schedule. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: as noted in schedule 1.

Schedule 1	
Restriction:	Temporary One Way Order Eastbound from 14.00 – 20.00 hours.
Road Name:	Scratchers Lane, West Kingsdown.
Extent:	From its junction with A20 London Road/Gorse Hill to its junction with Three Gates Lane.
Diversion:	A20 London Road and Fawkham Road.

Traffic lights will also be placed at the junction of A20 London Road and Gorse Hill that will be manually controlled between 14.00 – 20.00 hours to assist vehicles leaving Brands Hatch Race Circuit.

Restriction:	30mph Speed Limit.
Road Name:	A20 London Road/Gorse Hill, West Kingsdown.
Extent:	Between W J Kings Garage, London Road, Farnigham and Twenty Mile Texaco Petrol Station, West Kingsdown.
Restriction:	Suspend Cycle Lane Order.
Road Name:	A20 London Road/ Gorse Hill, West Kingsdown.
Extent 1:	Between Twenty Mile Texaco Petrol Station and Scratchers Lane
Extent 2:	Between Scratchers Lane and Twenty Mile Texaco Petrol Station.

Diversion:	Cyclists should dismount and walk along the pavement for the length of the restriction.
Restriction:	No Right Turn.
1:	Into Donkey Lane southbound from A20 London Road/Gorse Hill.
2:	Out of Donkey Lane onto A20 London Road/Gorse Hill.

Dates: 3rd April, 25th April, 24th July, 7th August, 4th September, 2nd October and 9th October 2011.

The purpose of the restrictions is to facilitate safety to road users and members of the public.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Swale

DAWES ROAD, DUNKIRK (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of water mains replacement works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Dawes Road, Dunkirk, on or after 28 March 2011 for up to 9 weeks or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with Staplestreet Road and Stoney Road.

The alternative route is via Staplestreet Road, Canterbury Road, Boughton Hill, Canterbury Road and Courtenay Road.

BANISTER HILL & HEARTS DELIGHT, BORDEN (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

To allow BT access to an underground structure in the road, Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting through traffic on Banister Hill & Hearts Delight, Borden, on or after 14 March 2011 for up to 3 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed between the junctions with Borden Lane and Hearts Delight Road.

The alternative route is via The Street, Pond Farm Road, Sutton Baron Road and Wrens Road.

It is planned the road will be closed between 9.30 am and 3.30 pm and re-opened outside these hours.

HIGHWAYS - District of Thanet

VARIOUS ROADS, MARGATE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of gas mains replacement works, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Various Roads, Margate, on or after 28 March 2011 for up to 25 weeks or until the works have been completed.

DANE HILL, MARGATE will be closed at the junction with Dane Road, from 28 March for up to 3 weeks.

The alternative route is via King Street, Trinity Hill, Trinity Square and Northdown Road.

The One-way Traffic Order will be suspended to allow access only.

KING STREET, MARGATE will be closed between the junctions with Dane Road and Hawley Street.

From 18 April 2011 for up to 10 weeks.

The alternative route is via Addington Street, Union Crescent and Hawley Street

DANE HILL, MARGATE – will be closed for its entire length, from 27 June 2011 for up to 12 weeks.The alternative route is as shown above, with the One-way Traffic Order suspended to allow access only.

DANE HILL GROVE, MARGATE will be closed for its entire length, from 18 July 2011 for up to 2 weeks.

There is no alternative route. Every effort will be made to maintain access whenever it is safe to do so.

The dates of the phases are approximate guidelines, and may vary subject to weather and ground conditions. The exact dates will be notified to local residents and businesses and signposted on site.

PARAGON STREET, RAMSGATE (PROHIBITION OF DRIVING) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011

THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Because of works to provide a new gas supply, Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting through traffic on Paragon Street, Ramsgate, on or after 28 March 2011 for up to 5 days or until the works have been completed.

The road will be closed outside number 4.

The alternative route is via Addington Street, West Cliff Road and Royal Road.

The One-way Traffic Order in respect of Paragon Street will be suspended to allow access up to the point of closure.

HIGHWAYS - Borough of Tonbridge & Malling

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, TONBRIDGE AND MALLING)
(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND ON-STREET PARKING PLACES)
(AMENDMENT NO 2) ORDER 2010

NOTICE is hereby given that KENT COUNTY COUNCIL propose to make the above named Order under sections 1(1) and (2), 2(1) to (3), 3(2), 4(1) and (2), 32(1), 35(1), 45, 46, 49 and 53 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, and of all other enabling powers, and after consultation with the chief officer of police in accordance with Paragraph 20 of Schedule 9 to the Act:

- The Order will have the effect of:-
- introducing no waiting at any time (double yellow lines) at the junction of Alexander Grove and Milton Lane, Kings Hill, West Malling;
 - introducing “school keep clear” markings in Alexander Grove in the vicinity of the Kings Hill School, West Malling in the interest of public safety to all pedestrians crossing this road gaining access to and from the school.

The Order was sealed on 4 March 2011 and will come into force 14 March 2011.

Full details are contained in the Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended and a statement of the Council's reasons for making the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at Mondays to Fridays at the Council Offices, Gibson Building, Gibson Drive, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent and at Sessions House, Maidstone during normal opening times.

Any person wishing to question the validity of the Order or any of the provisions contained therein on the grounds that it is not within the powers of the relevant enabling Act or that any requirement of any such enabling Act or of any regulations made thereunder have not been complied with may within 6 weeks from the date on which the Order was made make application to the High Court for this purpose.

HIGHWAYS - Borough Of Tunbridge Wells

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
(VARIOUS ROADS, SPELDHURST)
(WAITING RESTRICTIONS AND STREET PARKING PLACES) (CONSOLIDATION) (AMENDMENT NO 1) ORDER 2011

THE KENT COUNTY COUNCIL (hereinafter referred to as “the Council”) acting as the local traffic authority and in exercise of its powers under Sections 1, 2, 4 and 124 of and Part IV of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (hereinafter referred to as the “Act of 1984”) and as amended by the Traffic Management Act 2004 Part 6 and of all other enabling powers and after consultation with the Chief Officer of Police in accordance with Part III of Schedule 9 to the Act of 1984, hereby makes the following Order.

The effect of the Order will be to introduce no waiting at any time (double yellow lines) on the following roads or lengths of road in the village of Speldhurst:-

PENSHURST ROAD NORTHFIELDS	SOUTHFIELDS ST MARY'S LANE	BARDEN ROAD FURZFIELD AVENUE
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Full details are contained in the draft Order which, together with the relevant plans, any Orders amended by the proposals and a statement of the Council's reasons for proposing to make the Order may be examined on Mondays to Fridays at the Council Offices, Town Hall, Civic Way, Royal Tunbridge Wells.

If you wish to offer support for or object to the proposed order you should send the grounds in writing to, Network Performance Team, 1st Floor Invicta House, Invicta House, Maidstone, Kent, ME14 1XX by noon on Monday 4 April 2011.

Katherine Kerswell
Group Managing Director
Kent County Council
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent

For further information, please contact
Kent Highway Services, on 08458 247 800
(local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways



HIGHWAYS

HIGHWAYS – Borough of Maidstone**BELTRING LEVEL CROSSING GRAVELLY WAYS YALDING) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011****THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991**

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council has made an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Beltring Level crossing Gavelly Way Yalding on or after Saturday 2nd April 2011 (at 22030) until Monday 4th April 2011 (at 04.00am) for a period of up to 3 days or until such works are completed.

The alternative route is via Gravelly Ways, Lees Road, Hampstead Lane, Maidstone Road , Boyle Way, Branbridges Road and Gravelly Ways and vice versa.

Network Rail apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to enable a level crossing inspection. Should you require any further information the Mel Speight on 01924 371 967

HIGHWAYS – District of Sevenoaks**BILLET HILL, ASH-CUM-RIDLEY – (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991**

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Billet Hill, Ash-Cum-Ridley between Fawkham Green Road to Ash Road.

The Order will become effective on 14th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 5 days. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Crowhurst Lane, Azo London Road, Ash Lane, South Ash Road and The Street.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate BT works.

GRANVILLE ROAD, SEVENOAKS – (TEMPORARY PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991

Notice is hereby given that owing to the likelihood of danger to the public whilst works are carried out on or near the highway the Kent County Council has made an Order restricting the use by vehicular traffic on Granville Road, Sevenoaks from its junction with London Road to the boundary of Granville Court.

The Order will become effective on 14th March 2011, will be in operation and remain valid for a maximum period of 18 months; the works are planned to last 8 weeks. These restrictions will be effective when the appropriate signage is in place.

The alternative route for the above restriction will be via: Gordon Road, Argyle Road, London Road and Tubs Hill.

The purpose of the closure is to facilitate working space for the construction of a new highway retaining structure.

Highways – Borough of Tonbridge & Malling**(LOWER HAYSDEN LANE TONBRIDGE) (PROHIBITION OF TRAFFIC) TEMPORARY ORDER 2011 THE ROAD TRAFFIC REGULATION ACT 1984 AS AMENDED BY THE ROAD TRAFFIC (TEMPORARY RESTRICTIONS) ACT 1991**

NOTICE is hereby given that because works are proposed to be carried out on or near a road the Kent County Council intends to make an Order prohibiting the use by through traffic on Lower Haysden Lane Tonbridge between junction of Upper Haysden Lane and Hayesden Lane and the southern boundary of number 2 Great Haysden on or after Monday 14th March 2011 or a period of up to 1 week such works are completed.

The alternative route for the route described above is Upper Haysden Lane , Lower Haysden Lane and vice versa..

Kent Highway Services apologise for any inconvenience caused by these works, which are necessary to repair a broken highway drainage pipe to prevent highway flooding and road surface deterioration.

Should you require any further information the Kent Highway Services contact is Sarah Fletcher on 08458 247 800.

For further information please contact Kent Highway Services on 08458 247 800 (local rate) or visit www.kent.gov.uk/highways



MARRIAGE LICENCES

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND
CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004****APPROVED PREMISES FOR
CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **Blue Pigeons at Worth, The Street, Worth, Deal**
Applicant: **Marilyn Mellins**

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the grant of an approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
1st Floor, Invicta House,
Maidstone, ME14 1XX

**KENT COUNTY COUNCIL
THE MARRIAGE ACT 1949 AND
CIVIL PARTNERSHIP ACT 2004****APPROVED PREMISES FOR
CIVIL MARRIAGES & CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

An application has been made to Kent County Council to grant an approval for the following premises to act as a venue for the solemnisation of civil marriages and civil partnerships:-

Name of Premises: **Saint Ronans School, Water Lane, Hawkhurst**
Applicant: **John Buckles**

The application and plan of the premises may be inspected at the address below during normal office hours. Any person may give notice in writing of an objection to the grant of an approval, together with the reasons, within 21 days from the date of this newspaper. Objections should be sent to the address below.

Giles Adey
Head of Registration
1st Floor, Invicta House,
Maidstone, ME14 1XX



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PLANNING

Town and Country Planning Acts

The Council is required to give notice of the following applications

11/00547/HOUSE The Cottage The Green, Brencley
- Single storey rear extension (LB)(CA)

11/00484/FUL Land Between 1 And 11 Broadcroft, Broadwater
- Extension of time - Three detached dwellings (planning permission TW/07/03046 refers) (CA)

11/00493/FUL 10 Earls Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden
- Roof lantern to existing ground floor rear flat roof, alterations to existing double doors and windows to rear. New driveway access and drop kerb (CA)

11/00507/FUL 22 Mount Ephraim Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden
- Conversion from office use to residential use (CA)(LB)

11/00509/LBC 22 Mount Ephraim Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Culverden
- Listed Building Consent - Conversion from office use to residential use (LB)

11/00569/FUL OS Plot 5250 Rear Of Gould Farm, Frittenden
- Change of use of land to equestrian and erection of stable/garage building. Addition of hardstanding and gate (LB)

11/00466/HOUSE 5 Cliffe Cottages North Road, Goudhurst
- Retrospective - Erection of decked terrace (CA)(LB)

11/00245/FUL 4 - 5 Deanborough House Highgate Hill, Hawkhurst
- Change of use from A1 (Shops) to A3 (Cafes) (CA)

11/00504/LBC Old Nevergood Farmhouse Brick Kiln Lane, Horsmonden
- Listed Building Consent: Like for like replacement of 4 window frames (LB)

11/00506/FUL The Tower And Belfry Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst
- Conversion of existing single (tower) flat into two separate flats and internal alterations to the Belfry flat (LB)

11/00510/LBC The Tower Scotney Castle, Lamberhurst
- Listed Building consent - Conversion of existing single (tower) flat into two separate flats and internal alterations to the Belfry flat (LB)

11/00528/HOUSE Stable Cottage Mount Pleasant, Lamberhurst
- Enlargement of rear dormer (LB)

11/00535/LBC 12 - 14 High Street Royal Tunbridge Wells, Pantiles & St Marks
- Listed Building Consent - relocate staircase in original position, remove modern alterations and fittings and fitout including finishes, mechanical and electrical installations. Retain existing shopfront and internal walls (LB)

11/00449/HOUSE 6 Shandon Close Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park
- Extension to front, side and rear including internal and external modernisation (CA)

11/00472/FUL 72 - 74 Calverley Road Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park
- Retrospective - Replacement of security gate on front elevation (CA)

11/00562/HOUSE West Lodge Chilton House, Park
- Proposed rear single storey extension, new entrance portico and replacement roof to garage (CA)

11/00580/CAC 2 The Ferns Royal Tunbridge Wells, Park
- Conservation Area Consent - Demolition of garden wall (CA)

11/00527/HOUSE 23 Upper Street Rusthall, Rusthall
- Parking space to front of dwelling (CA)

11/00402/LBC Old Place Church Road, Sandhurst
- Listed Building Consent: Replace rotten timber sash windows with double glazed timber sash windows on front elevation (LB)

11/00446/FUL Oaklands Farm Bodiam Road, Sandhurst
- General purpose agricultural building and installation of package treatment plant (PROW)

11/00537/TELN5 High Brooms Station Car Park North Farm Road, Sherwood
- Telecommunication Notification - Replacement of existing 15 metre high Vodafone installation with a 15.3 metre high installation, and replacement of 1 no. equipment cabinet and related development (MAST)

(DEVPLN) Departure from the Development Plan (PROW) Affecting A Public Right of Way (CA) Affecting a Conservation Area (LB) Affecting a Listed Building (MAJOR) Major Applications (MAST) Mast Applications (EIA) Applications Accompanied by an EIA Statement.

You may view these applications on our website (www.tunbridgewells.gov.uk), at The Old Fire Station, Stone Street, Cranbrook or at Gateway, 8 Grosvenor Road, Tunbridge Wells. We accept comments online, by email to planningcomments@tunbridgewells.gov.uk or in writing to the address below. Comments should be made within 21 days from the date of this notice, although we may accept them after this date.

You should quote the reference and be aware that we make all comments available for inspection, placing them on the file and publishing them on the internet. We do not publish signatures, telephone numbers or email addresses on the internet.

Jim Kehoe
Head of Planning Services
Town Hall Royal Tunbridge Wells TN1 1RS

Dated: 12 March 2011



COUNCIL NOTICES

**REGULATION OF SEXUAL ENTERTAINMENT VENUES
LOCAL GOVERNMENT (MISCELLANEOUS
PROVISIONS) ACT 1982
SCHEDULE 3**

NOTICE IS GIVEN that on 23 February 2011 Tunbridge Wells Borough Council passed a resolution adopting the amendments to the above Act as amended by the Policing and Crime Act 2009 for the regulation of Sexual Entertainment Venues within the district. Such provisions will come into force on 1 April 2011 the first appointed day.

To place your notice here call the Kent Public Notice team
on
01303 817044



Driving www.carsforkent.co.uk



Vauxhall ups the Antara

First Drive

by
IAIN DOOLEY

Vauxhall Antara

AS ANY car executive will tell you, moving with the times is key to survival. Market trends and customer buying habits change so often now that the you can't stand still for even a moment.

When it was first launched, Vauxhall's Antara allowed the brand to move into the expanding 'soft-roader' market. The car's chunky looks and smart blend of Vauxhall design added a sense of familiarity to its go (almost) anywhere abilities thanks to the inclusion of all-wheel drive.

Second time around, and the Antara retains its trademark purposeful looks, although there's been a general tidy up fore and aft: new lights, grille. It also gains an electronic parking brake and a new diesel

engine in two states of tune plus the option of front-wheel drive. Mechanically these options fit well with the current focus on lower emissions and fuel consumption. A predictable but welcome refining of the car's on-road behaviour also forms part of the update package.

Aside from the on-paper changes, it shouldn't come as a surprise that the Antara is a spacious and accommodating car. What does come as a surprise is that it rivals some full-size SUVs for a general feeling of roominess, despite boasting a similar sized footprint to a conventional family estate.

The Antara's cabin also boasts a more up-market ambience. The use of quality plastics and contrasting trim materials have done much to boost the car's aesthetic appeal.

There's a school of thought that believes such a policy will help lure customers away from more expensive premium SUVs as some buyers choose to downsize for cost-saving reasons. Certainly, the general fit, finish and overall feel of the Antara's revised cabin lends considerable weight to this argument.

Out on the road the Antara corners well with a minimum of body roll and stops with little effort. The car's ride is generally compliant but Vauxhall's engineers have opted for a slightly firm setup to boost driver

enjoyment. And, even with big wheels fitted, the Antara copes well with the usual urban hazards.

Normally at this point it would be time to talk about the car's all-wheel drive performance. However, in line with an increasing number of rivals, front-wheel drive is now an option. Predictably this is a great choice for buyers who will never venture away from the security of Tarmac and are relatively undemanding when it comes to towing caravans or trailers. The trade off is a modest improvement in fuel consumption and CO2 emissions from the Antara's 2.2-litre diesel engine.

Effective

For some, though, the attraction of all-wheel drive is easy to justify. In reality the Antara's 'on demand' system offers the best of both worlds anyway. Only working when it's needed, the system is smart, effective and quick to respond, meaning the driver needn't worry too much about changing conditions.

Ordinarily, power is sent to the front wheels, but when a loss of grip is detected that balance can change to as much as 50 per cent to the rear wheels depending on the conditions. Factor in hill descent control and you're all set for that muddy hill ahead.

Of course, none of this would be possible

without the new 2.2-litre diesel engine. This Euro 5 specification motor can be had with either 163 or 184 horsepower, with the former also available for front-drive variants.

Aside from power outputs, the engines also boast wallet-friendly economy credentials. The low power unit combines 44.8mpg with a CO2 rating of 167g/km. The high power option delivers 42.8mpg and 175g/km CO2.

Both prove exceptionally quiet and refined on the road and lack the rattly attributes still a feature of some rivals' engines. Acceleration is brisk, especially with the 184 horsepower Antara, and the standard fit six-speed manual gearbox can be swapped for a six-speed auto – both new for the Antara.

Available in two trim levels and packing a considerable amount of standard fit safety and comfort equipment, Vauxhall's revised Antara offers drivers a refined and enjoyable driving experience.

As an alternative to a conventional family car, the five-seat SUV's practical cabin easily accommodated an active lifestyle, while the all-wheel drive element will be the icing on the cake for anyone seeking break away from the beaten track.



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10 10	ASTRA SPORTS HATCH 1.4 3DR Red	£10995
10 60	ASTRA SRI 1.4 3DR Sovereign Silver	£11495
10 10	ASTRA EXCLUSIV 1.6 5DR Technical Grey	£11995
10 60	ASTRA SRI SPORTS HATCH 1.6 3DR White	£11995
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10 59	ASTRA VXR 2.0 3DR Arden Blue	£15995

CORSA SELECTION

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09 09	CORSA DESIGN 1.4 5DR Black Sapphire	£8995
10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR White or Silver Lightning	£8995
10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Black Sapphire	£9495
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Flame Red or White	£9495
10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Star Silver or Metro Blue	£9495
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Metro Blue	£9995
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.3 3DR Oriental Blue	£9995
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR Waterworld	£9995

CORSA SELECTION

10 10	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 3DR White	£9995
10 60	CORSA SXI A/C 1.2 3DR Flame Red	£9995
10 60	CORSA SXI A/C 1.2 3DR Black Sapphire	£10350
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 5DR Metro Blue	£10995
10 60	CORSA ENERGY 1.2 5DR Star Silver or Black Sapphire	£10995
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09 09	INSIGNIA EXCLUSIV 1.8 5DR Sovereign Silver	£10995
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09 59	INSIGNIA SRI 4X4 2.0 5DR Black Sapphire	£15495
10 60	INSIGNIA EXCLUSIV 130PS 2.0 5DR Technical Grey	£16495
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10 60	MERIVA EXCLUSIV CDTI 1.7D 5DR Waterworld	£16995

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08 58	VECTRA DESIGN 2.2 5DR Ultra Blue	£7495
08 08	VECTRA SRI 1.8 5DR Pomegranate Red	£8250
08 58	VECTRA SRI NAV X PACK AUTO CDTI 1.9D 5DR Star Silver	£9495

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03 53	ZAFIRA CLUB 1.8 5DR Ultra Blue	£3695
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08 08	ZAFIRA BREEZE 1.6 5DR Silver Lightning	£7995

ZAFIRA SELECTION

08 08	ZAFIRA BREEZE 1.6 5DR Metro Blue	£8495
09 59	ZAFIRA ACTIVE PLUS 1.8 5DR Ultra Blue	£11995
10 10	ZAFIRA ENERGY 1.8 5DR Black Sapphire	£12995
10 60	ZAFIRA ENERGY 1.8 5DR Silver Lightning	£13995
10 10	ZAFIRA ENERGY CDTI 1.7D 5DR Star Silver	£14995
10 10	ZAFIRA SRI X PACK CDTI 1.9D 5DR Black Sapphire	£17995

NON-VAUXHALL SELECTION

04 04	CITROEN C3 DESIRE HDP 1.4 5DR Silver	£3995
02 52	FORD FIESTA LX 1.4 5DR Silver	£3275
03 03	FORD FIESTA LX 1.2 5DR Silver	£3495
04 04	FORD FIESTA ZETEC 1.4 5DR Metallic Blue	£3995
04 54	FORD KA LUXE 1.3 2DR Black	£3495
02 52	FORD MONDEO LX 1.8 5DR Silver	£2995
04 54	PEUGEOT 206 STYLE DIESEL 1.4 3DR Red	£3995
01 51	RENAULT CLIO DYNAMIQUE 1.4 3DR Grey	£2995
04 53	RENAULT MEGANE EXPRESSION 1.4 5DR Blue	£3275
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10 60	ASTRAVAN SPORTIVE 1.7D 3DR Star Silver	£11995+VAT
10 10	COMBO CDTI 1.3 5DR White	£7495+VAT
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10 60	COMBO VAN 1.3 5DR Star Silver or White	£9495+VAT
10 60	COMBO VAN 1.3 4DR Star Silver	£9995+VAT
08 08	CORSAVAN SPORTIVE 1.3 5DR Star Silver	£6995+VAT
10 60	CORSAVAN 1.3 3DR White	£8495+VAT
10 60	CORSAVAN SPORTIVE 1.3 3DR Star Silver	£9995+VAT
10 60	VIVARO DOUBLE CAB SPORTIVE LWB 2.0 5DR Star Silver	£15995+VAT
10 10	VIVARO LWB 2.0 5DR Glacier White	£10995+VAT

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2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles,	£10,995
2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA EXCLUSIV AC SDR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 6000 miles,	£9,995
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2009(59) NISSAN NOTE VISIA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles,	£9,995
2010(10) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles,	£9,995
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2009(59) SUZUKI SWIFT GLX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 450 miles,	£9,495
2009(09) VAUXHALL AGILA DESIGN SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles,	£8,995
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2006(06) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles,	£7,995

NEW FIESTA

2010(60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 2000 miles,	£12,995
2010(60) FORD FIESTA TITANIUM 3DR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles,	£11,995
2009(58) FORD FIESTA STYLE PLUS 3DR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles,	£8,995
2009(08) FORD FIESTA STYLE CLIMATE 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) FORD FIESTA GHIA 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 16000 miles,	£6,995

FOCUS HATCH & SALOON

2009(09) FORD FOCUS ZETEC SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 3000 miles,	£10,995
2008(58) FORD FOCUS STYLE SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 3000 miles,	£9,995
2008(08) FORD FOCUS ZETEC SDR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 4000 miles,	£8,995
2008(57) FORD FOCUS STYLE SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles,	£8,995
2005(55) FORD FOCUS GHIA 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 27000 miles,	£6,495
2007(57) FORD FOCUS ZETEC CLIMATE 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, TONIC BLUE, 21000 miles,	£6,995
2005(54) FORD FOCUS LX SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles,	£4,995

FOCUS ESTATES

2007(57) FORD FOCUS STYLE ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles,	£6,495
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RENAULT SCENIC

2009(59) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE DCI FAP TURBO MPV AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles,	£16,995
2007(07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 T5TR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles,	£8,995
2007(07) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 136 T5TR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles,	£8,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 S5TR MPV AUTO, RED, 13000 miles,	£7,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 S5TR MPV AUTO, GREY, 10000 miles,	£7,995
2007(07) RENAULT SCENIC PRIVILEGE VVT 111 S5TR MPV AUTO, GREY, 26000 miles,	£7,995
2008(57) RENAULT SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 S5TR MPV AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles,	£6,995

RENAULT

2010(10) RENAULT GRAND MODUS DYNAMIQUE VVT SDR HATCH AUTO, OTTOMON BLUE, 1000 miles,	£9,995
2007(57) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 136 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, GOLD, 12000 miles,	£9,995
2010(10) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles,	£9,995
2010(60) RENAULT MODUS GRAND DYNAMIQUE VVT SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 250 miles,	£9,995
2008(08) RENAULT GRAND SCENIC DYNAMIQUE VVT 136 T5TR MPV AUTO, GREEN, 15000 miles,	£8,995
2008(58) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles,	£8,995
2006(06) RENAULT MEGANE DYNAMIQUE VVT 111 CONVERTIBLE AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles,	£7,995
2008(58) RENAULT KANGOO AUTHENTIQUE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 300 miles,	£7,995
2008(58) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREY, 1500 miles,	£7,495
2008(08) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREY, 12000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) RENAULT MEGANE PRIVILEGE VVT 111 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 10000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) RENAULT KADUNA EXPRESSION SPORT TOURER 16V ESTATE AUTO, GREY, 8000 miles,	£6,995
2006(57) RENAULT MODUS DYNAMIQUE S VVT SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£6,495
2005(05) RENAULT KANGOO EXPRESSION 16V MPV AUTO, GREEN, 39000 miles,	£3,995

CHEVROLET

2008(08) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles,	£6,995
2008(58) CHEVROLET AVEO LT SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 999 miles,	£6,995
2008(08) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 3000 miles,	£6,995
2008(58) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX ESTATE AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles,	£6,995
2009(59) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 1100 miles,	£6,495
2008(57) CHEVROLET KALOS SX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles,	£5,495
2006(56) CHEVROLET LACETTI SX SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 15000 miles,	£4,995
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 18000 miles,	£4,495
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles,	£4,495
2007(07) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 20000 miles,	£4,495

HYUNDAI

2008(58) HYUNDAI MATRIX COMFORT MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 10000 miles,	£6,995
2008(58) HYUNDAI GETZ GSI SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles,	£6,995
2009(59) HYUNDAI I10 COMFORT SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles,	£6,995
2008(08) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI MPV AUTO, RED, 7000 miles,	£6,495
2006(56) HYUNDAI GETZ CDX SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 9000 miles,	£5,995
2008(08) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 24000 miles,	£5,995
2007(57) HYUNDAI ACENT ATLANTIC LIMITED EDITION SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 6000 miles,	£5,995
2007(57) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI SALOON AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles,	£5,995
2008(08) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles,	£5,995
2007(07) HYUNDAI MATRIX GSI MPV AUTO, BLACK, 15000 miles,	£5,495
2004(54) HYUNDAI GETZ GSI SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles,	£4,495
2006(56) HYUNDAI AMICA CDX SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 18000 miles,	£3,995
2002(51) HYUNDAI AMICA SI SDR HATCH AUTO, YELLOW, 31000 miles,	£2,495

KIA

2009(09) KIA CEEB GS SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles,	£8,995
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DAIHATSU

2008(08) DAIHATSU SIRION SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 13000 miles,	£6,995
2008(08) DAIHATSU SIRION SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 8000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) DAIHATSU SIRION SE SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£6,495
2007(07) DAIHATSU SIRION SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 16000 miles,	£5,995
2007(07) DAIHATSU SIRION 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 20000 miles,	£5,995

BMW

2009(59) BMW 3 SERIES 320I SE COUPE AUTO, BRONZE, 4000 miles,	£19,995
2008(08) BMW 3 SERIES 320I SE COUPE AUTO, GREY, 10000 miles,	£18,995

FIAT

2010(10) FIAT PUNTO EVO DYNAMIC DUALOGIC SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 500 miles,	£9,495
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FUSION

2010(10) FORD FUSION ZETEC SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1800 miles,	£9,995
2008(08) FORD FUSION FUSION + SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 13000 miles,	£7,995
2009(09) FORD FUSION FUSION + SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 16000 miles,	£7,495
2006(56) FORD FUSION ZETEC CLIMATE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 6000 miles,	£5,995

CITROEN

2007(57) CITROEN C3 SX 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, DIABLO RED, 13000 miles,	£5,995
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CORSA

2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles,	£10,995
2010(10) VAUXHALL CORSA EXCLUSIV AC SDR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 6000 miles,	£9,995
2009(59) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 750 miles,	£9,495
2009(58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles,	£8,995
2008(58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 12000 miles,	£8,995
2009(09) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, ULTRA BLUE, 4000 miles,	£8,995
2008(58) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles,	£8,495
2008(58) VAUXHALL CORSA CLUB AC 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 9000 miles,	£8,495
2008(58) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 11000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, GOLD, 5000 miles,	£7,495
2005(54) VAUXHALL CORSA DESIGN 16V SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 4000 miles,	£5,495

MAZDA

2008(58) MAZDA 3 3 TAKARA SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 5000 miles,	£9,995
2008(08) MAZDA 3 3 TS2 SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 17000 miles,	£8,995
2006(56) MAZDA 6 6 TS SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 21000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) MAZDA 3 3 TS SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 8000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) MAZDA 2 2 CAPPELLA SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 15000 miles,	£6,495
2007(56) MAZDA 2 2 S SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 17000 miles,	£5,995

SUZUKI

2009(59) SUZUKI SWIFT GLX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 450 miles,	£9,495
2009(59) SUZUKI SWIFT GLX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 5000 miles,	£8,995
2007(57) SUZUKI SX4 GLX SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 21000 miles,	£7,495

TOYOTA

2007(57) TOYOTA PRIUS T SPIRIT VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles,	£12,995
2010(10) TOYOTA IQ VVT-I IQ SDR HATCH AUTO, PURPLE, 6000 miles,	£8,495
2007(57) TOYOTA AURIS T SPIRIT VVT-I MM SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles,	£8,995
2007(07) TOYOTA AURIS T3 VVT-I MM SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 17000 miles,	£8,995
2007(07) TOYOTA COROLLA T3 VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£8,995
2008(58) TOYOTA YARIS T3 VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, VENETIAN SILVER, 14000 miles,	£7,995
2005(05) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T SPIRIT VVT-I MPV AUTO, CHAMPAGNE, 9000 miles,	£7,995
2005(54) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T SPIRIT VVT-I MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£7,495
2005(55) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 5000 miles,	£7,495
2005(55) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, CRYSTAL SILVER, 5000 miles,	£6,995
2007(07) TOYOTA YARIS T3 VVT-I MM SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 21000 miles,	£6,995
2005(05) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 12000 miles,	£6,995
2005(55) TOYOTA YARIS VERSO T3 VVT-I MPV AUTO, CHAMPAGNE, 25000 miles,	£6,495
2004(04) TOYOTA YARIS T SPIRIT VVT-I SDR HATCH, BLACK, 25000 miles,	£5,495

NISSAN

2010(10) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLADE SILVER, 10000 miles,	£19,995
2009(09) NISSAN QASHQAI TEKNA SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles,	£17,995
2009(09) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 9000 miles,	£15,995
2009(09) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 17000 miles,	£15,995
2009(09) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, ORANGE, 7000 miles,	£15,995
2008(58) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 2000 miles,	£15,495
2010(60) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles,	£14,995
2010(59) NISSAN CUBE KAIZEN SDR HATCH AUTO, WHITE, 1000 miles,	£12,995
2007(57) NISSAN QASHQAI ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 21000 miles,	£12,995
2010(60) NISSAN NOTE TEKNA MPV AUTO, BLACK, 500 miles,	£11,995
2009(58) NISSAN MICRA 25 CONVERTIBLE CC CONVERTIBLE AUTO, EMOTION RED, 11000 miles,	£9,995
2010(10) NISSAN MICRA TEKNA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLADE SILVER, 6000 miles,	£9,995
2009(59) NISSAN NOTE VISIA MPV AUTO, GREY, 1800 miles,	£9,995
2009(59) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 7000 miles,	£8,495
2009(59) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles,	£8,495
2010(60) NISSAN PIXO N-TEC SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 999 miles,	£7,995
2008(08) NISSAN NOTE TEKNA MPV AUTO, BLACK, 7000 miles,	£7,995
2010(59) NISSAN PIXO N-TEC SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 3000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA PLUS SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 12000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 18000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) NISSAN MICRA ACENTA SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 15000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) NISSAN MICRA SPIRITA SDR HATCH AUTO, RED, 11000 miles,	£6,495
2006(56) NISSAN NOTE SE MPV AUTO, ORANGE, 21000 miles,	£5,995
2005(05) NISSAN ALMERA S SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 11000 miles,	£4,995
2002(02) NISSAN MICRA S SDR HATCH AUTO, WHITE, 10000 miles,	£2,995

ASTRA HATCHBACKS

2010(10) VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE SDR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 950 miles,	£15,995
2010(60) VAUXHALL ASTRA SE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 2000 miles,	£14,995
2009(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA ELITE SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles,	£11,995
2009(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN SDR HATCH AUTO, GREY, 5000 miles,	£9,495
2010(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles,	£9,495
2009(59) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 2000 miles,	£8,995
2009(09) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, SILVER LIGHTNING, 14000 miles,	£8,995
2009(58) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 8000 miles,	£8,495
2008(58) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 30000 miles,	£8,495
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, ULTRA BLUE, 11000 miles,	£7,495
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 19000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, TURQUOISE, 20000 miles,	£6,995
2008(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BEIGE/BUFF, 14000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLACK, 17000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 19000 miles,	£5,995
2008(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V E4 SDR HATCH AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles,	£5,995

ASTRA ESTATES

2008(58) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 8000 miles,	£7,995
2008(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, SILVER, 14000 miles,	£6,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 140 ESTATE AUTO, BLUE, 14000 miles,	£6,995
2008(08) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 140 ESTATE AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 12000 miles,	£6,995
2006(56) VAUXHALL ASTRA DESIGN 16V ESTATE AUTO, PANACOTTA, 16000 miles,	£6,495
2006(56) VAUXHALL ASTRA LIFE AC 16V ESTATE AUTO, BLACK, 11000 miles,	£5,995

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2009(59) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA EXCLUSIV CDTI TO MPV AUTO, ICE GREEN, 7000 miles,	£12,995
2010(10) VAUXHALL MERIVA DESIGN 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 1000 miles,	£10,995
2008(08) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA DESIGN DIRECT MPV AUTO, BLUE, 850 miles,	£10,995
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2008(08) VAUXHALL MERIVA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, GOLD, 3000 miles,	£8,995
2008(08) VAUXHALL AGLA DESIGN SDR HATCH AUTO, SILVER, 1000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, TURQUOISE, 13000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, BLUE, 9000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, PANNACOTTA, 11000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 14000 miles,	£7,995
2007(57) VAUXHALL MERIVA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ICE GREEN, 7000 miles,	£7,995
2008(58) CHEVROLET MATIZ SE SDR HATCH AUTO, GREEN, 7000 miles,	£5,995
2004(54) VAUXHALL ZAFIRA LIFE 16V MPV AUTO, ALUMINIUM SILVER, 78000 miles,	£3,995

FIRST GEAR

Compiled by Steve Loader



Hyundai stuns Geneva

HYUNDAI has confirmed that the D-segment in the motor market – popularly known as the Mondeo sector – is dominated increasingly by estate car models.

The ambitious Korean marque did so by using the current Geneva Motor Show for the world premiere of its new D-segment contender (pictured), the i40 and showing it only in estate or 'wagon' – it will arrive in the UK in this format soon, to be followed by a saloon later this year.

It's a sharp-suited offering penned by Hyundai's German-based design team, reflects the luxury-cum-lifestyle image of the modern estate car as it attempts to

beat MPV and crossover models on the market.

It also boasts features unavailable on some rivals, including heated folding rear seats; an auto-defog system; and heated steering wheel.

Hyundai also showed off its groundbreaking all-new three-door Veloster coupe – it has a rear door on the passenger side for greater useability – this a stunning looking coupe that doesn't have to be a 'holidays and high days' purchase.

And Geneva allowed the marque to show its Curb concept – an eye-catching urban crossover that will almost certainly see production in some form.

And now a fresh dash of Picanto

KIA – Hyundai's sister brand – has unveiled an all-new version of its Picanto city car.

And while the current Picanto is available only as a five-door hatchback, the next generation version will be offered in a sportier three-door, too.

The marque, currently riding high on the media and market acclaim for its muscular Sportage SUV/crossover, has announced the new Picanto's four powertrains will also be fresh out of the box and with the low and competitive CO2 emissions levels now demanded by a greener motor market.



Fiat retains green status



FIAT and its associated brands continue to set new standards in CO2 reduction, according to JATO Dynamics, the world's leading automotive consultancy.

Fiat Automobiles itself logged a CO2 average of just 123.1 g/km (4.7 g/km less than the 2009 average), placing it top of all brands for the fourth year running, and well ahead of the European target of 130g/km, due to be met in 2015.

Fiat also ranked first among the motor groups with 125.9g/km, an improvement of five g/km on last year and taking into account brands such as Ferrari, Maserati and Alfa Romeo.

However, the Italian group's CO2 crack-down continues to be epitomised by its big-selling small cars such as the Fiat 500C pictured – just the kind of models that eco-conscious consumers are now turning to.



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Mini Test

by
IAINDOOLEY

Honda Jazz

IF YOU want a good example of a company that listens to its customers you have to look at Honda. Although the Japanese firm is well known for innovation, it's also keen to ensure it promotes a culture of happy drivers.

And there's no better example of this than the firm's Jazz. More than just a sleeper hit, the compact Jazz has proven to be a UK best seller. By choosing to develop something that was more than just another supermini, Honda struck a chord with buyers seeking something with a small footprint but with the flexibility and practicality of something much bigger.

Success

This revised second-generation car builds on the original model's success. Presenting a chunkier face to the world, Honda's engineers have added a few aerodynamic tweaks to boost cabin refinement and overall efficiency. The latter is important, as this element plus selective engine improvements have resulted in economy and emissions gains. It's also revised the car's ride and handling performance to boost driver appeal and cabin comfort.

Talking of green issues, this Jazz has the honour of being the first small production hybrid. Keen to broaden the appeal of such technology beyond its Insight model, the Jazz hybrid follows on from the Japanese firm's sporting CRZ petrol-electric model.

There's more good news in the shape of the

Jazz refined to attract an even larger audience



BEST SELLER: The Honda Jazz is popular with buyers looking for more than just a supermini

reintroduction of a continuously variable transmission (CVT) as an option alongside the car's manual gearbox.

It might not sound like much, but the previously used automated manual transmission wasn't met with universal appeal.

As a result, Honda listened, took on board the feedback and now offers a CVT that should

please buyers seeking a smoother experience akin to that of a conventional auto, but without the fuel economy penalties.

Existing Jazz owners will be familiar with the car's 1.2 and 1.4-litre petrol engines, which now boast CO2 levels of 123 and 126g/km respectively in manual gearbox trim and return a combined fuel economy reading in the

low 50s mpg. The hybrid borrows much from Honda's existing Insight model, right down to the CVT gearbox.

It manages 62.8mpg and boasts a lower 104g/km CO2 rating, the latter Honda claims is the lowest for an auto gearbox car in the Jazz's market sector.

On the road the petrol cars are as you would expect – willing, capable and refined. In 1.4-litre trim plus the new CVT gearbox, the Jazz is easy to drive and the 'box offers a welcome extra layer of refinement over its predecessor.

Furthermore, the traditional enemies of CVT-equipped cars – inclines and fast-moving motorway traffic – are no barriers to progress. There's plenty of power available to get you moving and maintaining a steady speed.

This is also the case for the hybrid Jazz. Even in 'Eco' mode there's enough thrust available for out of town excursions, while urban motoring is dispatched with predictable ease.

The easy-to-read instrument displays keep you informed regarding fuel consumption and the current combination of engine and electric power, which do a clever job of nudging you in the direction of more considered and smoother driving behaviour.

Good though it is on the road, there's more to the Jazz than the driving experience. Its versatile nature is another major attraction for buyers, and the car's folding rear seats offer a greater level of versatility than the little Honda's more conventional rivals.

From furniture to bicycles, the Jazz will swallow many of these items whole. And for anyone seeking a car with a modest footprint, this feature is often a deal breaker. It also happens to be a hit with the business market; drivers who carry a lot of equipment but don't want – or their company car policy doesn't allow – a large, high CO2 car can opt for a Jazz with complete confidence.

With its well built and versatile cabin, a good level of standard kit plus the various improvements to the driving and ownership experience, Honda's Jazz remains a tough act to beat. The hybrid model will please those wanting to pay less for their motoring, too.

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Vehicle shown is an Orlando 2.0 VCDi LTZ with metallic paint at an extra cost of £410, and an Executive Pack at an optional cost of £2,000. Under the Motability Contract Hire Scheme for new cars, a driver can get the use of an Orlando 2.0 VCDi LS for 3 years by paying the Fixed Weekly Rentals from the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance, with an Advance Payment of £349. For applications approved by 31st March 2011. The facilities offered are for the hire (bailment) of goods. The Motability Contract Hire Scheme is administered by Motability Operations Limited (Registered Company No. 1373876), City Gate House, 22 Southwark Bridge Road, London, SE1 9HB. To qualify you must be in receipt of the Higher Rate Mobility Component of the Disability Living Allowance or War Pensioners' Mobility Supplement which will be taken in lieu of the monthly rental. Full written details, including terms and conditions, are available on request. All figures correct at time of going to press. Calls may be recorded and monitored for training purposes. (Chev006171)

Official Government Environment Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO₂ emissions (g/km). Orlando range: Urban - 29.1 (9.7) - 35.8 (7.9), Extra-urban - 47.9 (5.9) - 57.7 (4.9), Combined - 38.7 (7.3) - 47.1 (6.0). CO₂ emissions 186 - 159g/km.

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- 08 08 VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.9 CDTi Elite Est, 6sp, 1 owner, 75,000 miles, a/c, ABS, PAS, cruise, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, fogs, leather, alloys, in red £7,995
- 08 58 FORD FOCUS 1.8 TD STYLE 5DR EST, 1 owner, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in Met Black £7,495
- 08 08 FORD FOCUS 1.8 TDCi STYLE EST, 1 owner, 64,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, Met Grey £6,695
- 07 57 PEUGEOT 307 1.6 HDI EST, 1 owner, 68,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, cruise, RCL, Immob, EW, CD, alloys, in Met Red £5,995
- 05 55 FORD FOCUS 1.8 TDCi GHIA EST, 6sp, 2 owners, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, e/w, CD, alloys, in silver £4,695

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- 06 06 SAAB 9-3 2.0 VECTOR SEMI-AUTO 175 BHP 2dr CONVERTIBLE, 1 Owner, 55k, FDSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, Cruise, R/C/Locking, Immob, E/W, CD, E/Hood, Leather, Alloys in Parchment Silver £7,295
- 05 05 VAUXHALL ASTRA 2.0 BERTONE TURBO CONVERTIBLE, 28,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, Cruise, RCL, Immob, EV, Htd Seats, Alloys, Peacock Blue £6,995
- 04 04 SUBARU IMPREZA 2.0 WRX TURBO, AWD, 4dr, 71,000 miles, FDSH, a/c, r/c/locking, immob, ABS, PAS, e/w, CD, fogs, alloys, in met blue £6,695
- 03 53 MAZDA RX-82.6 231 PS 2DR Coupe, 6sp, 44,000 miles, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, e/s/roof, SAT NAV, htd, seats, leather, alloys, in red £5,495
- 06 06 FORD FOCUS 2.0 TDCi GHIA 4dr, 6sp, 2 owners, 97k, FSH, a/c, e/w, ABS, PAS, cruise, r/c/locking, immob, CD, alloys, in met blue £4,695
- 02 52 PEUGEOT 206 1.6 COUPE CONVERTIBLE, 59,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, ER, EW, CD, Leather, Alloys, Met Blue £4,295

HATCHBACKS

- 08 08 SEAT LEON 1.9 TDi Reference 5DR, 1 owner, 44,000 miles, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, in black £7,995
- 06 56 VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.9 CDTi Elite 5DR, 6sp, 1 owner, 94,000 FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, cruise, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, htd seats, auto lights, leather, in grey £5,495
- 07 56 FORD MONDEO 2.0 TDCi Edge 115BHP, 1 owner, 83k, FSH, ABS, PAS, A/C, RCL, E/W, CD, Alloy, in Met Green £4,695
- 04 54 VAUXHALL VECTRA 1.8 LIFE 5dr, 96,000 miles, FSH, AC, ABS, PAS, CBC, RCL, Immob, EW, EM, CD, Met Silver £3,495
- 04 54 RENAULT CLIO 1.2 16V EXTREME 3 3dr, 1 owner, 51,000 mls, FDSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, sunroof, CD, e/w, in silver £3,495
- 04 53 VAUXHALL ASTRA 1.7 DTi LS 5dr, 76,000 miles, SH, ABS, PAS, RCL, Immob, CD, in Met Blue £3,295

COMMERCIALS

- 08 57 MERCEDES SPRINTER 311 2.2 CDI LWB LUTON VAN, 1 owner, 138,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, e/w, CD, tail lift, in white £9,995 +vat
- 06 06 MITSUBISHI L200 2.5 DI-D Warrior D/Cab, 1 owner, 97,000 miles, FSH, a/c, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, CD, side steps, leather, alloys, in black £8,995 +vat
- 07 07 FORD TRANSIT 2.4 100 TDC 350 LWB/CAB, Tipper, 1 owner, 78,000 miles, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, CD, in white £8,495 +vat
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- 07 57 FORD TRANSIT 85 2.2 TDCi T280 SWB, Semi High Roof, 3 seater, 1 owner, 103,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, Immobiliser in White £5,495 +vat
- 03 03 FORD TRANSIT 2.4 TD 350 S/CAB, MWB Tipper, 2 owners, 100,000 miles, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, cloth trim, in white £4,995 +vat
- 07 07 PEUGEOT EXPERT 1.9D 815 70, 3 SEATER, 1 owner, 60,000 miles, FS, C/Locking, Immob, CD, Ply Lined in White £4,995 +vat
- 08 08 VAUXHALL ASTRAVAN 1.3 CDTi CLUB, 6 sp, 1 Owner, 73k, FSH, ABS, PAS, R/C/Locking, Immob, E/W, CD, In White £4,695 +vat
- 07 07 VAUXHALL ASTRAVAN 1.7 CDTi SPORTIVE, 6sp, 110,000 miles, FSH, A/C, ABS, PAS, R/C/L, E/W, Immobiliser, Alloys, CD in White £4,495 +vat
- 07 57 VAUXHALL COMBO 1.3 CDTi 17000 Van, 1 owner, 68,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, CD, ply lined, side loading door, in white £3,995 +vat
- 07 57 VAUXHALL COMBO 1.3 CDTi 1700 VAN, 1 owner, 76,000 miles, FSH, ABS, PAS, r/c/locking, immob, ply lined, CD, in white £3,995 +vat
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[†] 0% Typical finance example for Vauxhall Corsa Excite 1.2i 16v 3dr as advertised.

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Official Government Test Environmental Data. Fuel consumption figures mpg (litres/100km) and CO2 emissions (g/km). Vauxhall range: Urban: 14.4 (19.6) – 67.3 (4.2), Extra-urban: 27.4 (10.3) – 91.1 (3.1), Combined: 20.6 (13.7) – 80.7 (3.5). CO2 emissions: 324 – 94g/km.

[†] 5 years 0% finance on Corsa, Astra, Meriva and Insignia models = maximum finance balance £10,000. 5 years 0% finance on Zafira models = maximum finance balance £15,000. Finance supplied by Alpha Financial Services, Europa House, Bartley Way, Hook, Hampshire, RG27 9UF. [†] Finance subject to status, over 18's only, a guarantee may be required, written quotations available on request. Prices shown are available on selected WJ King stock vehicles only whilst stocks last and cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer. Offers apply to selected vehicles purchased and registered between 1st March 2011 and 31st March 2011 subject to availability and are available to private individuals and small businesses 1-24 (purchase only). All other sales categories are excluded. UK-supplied vehicles only. Vauxhall Lifetime Warranty covers lifetime ownership of first registered keeper, 100,000 mile limit. Terms and conditions apply. Please note, models portrayed are for illustration purposes only and may not represent actual model. A £99 inc. VAT admin fee (security checks and fuel) will be added to all vehicle purchases, this includes £20 worth of fuel. WJ King reserves the right to withdraw any offer at any time. Telephone calls may be recorded for training purposes. E&OE.

DrivingReviewby
DAVE MAIRS**Kia Ceed**

YOU know how it is. You've got an exciting trip planned and you and your mates have a barrow-load of gear to take with you.

And at some point someone – invariably the sensible, boring one – mentions transport. Quite how you and your grizzled chums, along with rucksacks, seats, telescopes and tripods – we were going to watch whales from aboard the ferry to Bilbao – are going to cram into your little runabout hadn't occurred to you though.

After much casting around, we borrowed a Kia Ceed 1.6 CRDi ISG. It is not a monster – think Ford Focus for size – but was larger than anything we had to hand.

As things worked out, travel plans changed and the whole operation became a two-car mission with just three in our vehicle. No bad thing though, as three people and their clobber was enough for this model.

We could have managed four, but it would have been a real squeeze and we might never have seen a pygmy-sized member of the party ever again.

However, as we all know, size isn't everything, as shown by the outstanding feature on the Ceed ISG – those last three letters are short for Intelligent Stop and Go.

The system works like this: when the car slows to below 3mph, say when approaching a junction or traffic lights, it stops. You select neutral and release the clutch and then simply restart when ready by depressing the clutch – 10 per cent, for the record, but I

Ceed proof there is nothing to concede when going green



don't expect you to measure it – and away you go, smoothly and wholly efficiently.

We're talking Kia's EcoDynamics technology here: an official combined fuel consumption of 67.3mpg on this Ceed and CO2 emissions of just 110g/km that also qualifies the car

for zero-rated road tax for year one and just £20/year thereafter.

In short, the less time your engine is running, the better it is for both your pocket and your beleaguered environment.

The scientific bit is not my world, but as a

driver I can happily report that, once I'd got used to it, I grew rather fond of the ISG system. All was smooth, with no juddering, and it was easy to believe that here was a glimpse at a brave new (and not quite as dirty) world.

The Ceed range arrived in 2007; an all-new



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WILMOTH'S MAIDSTONE 01622 298469SUTTON ROAD, MAIDSTONE, KENT, ME15 8RD www.wilmothsmidstone.citroen.co.uk



model and name, designed and built in Europe to attack Europe's finest – the VW Golf, Ford Focus and Vauxhall Astra – and featuring facets from all three, plus a mould-breaking seven-year/100,000-mile warranty as a significant extra.

This was the perfect lure for the most sceptical punters; once in the showroom, the curious could quickly see that the Ceed and its three-door Procead and Ceed SW estate spin-offs are good products

Kia now concedes that the mega-warranty was a gamble that could have gone expensively wrong if the Ceed engineering team had



messed up, but it didn't and all Kia models now come with a seven-year warranty.

Aware that the 2007-vintage Ceed could

be fidgety on the road, Kia also boosted the handling and ride when it gave the car a facelift in 2010.

As for new kit, Kia says the car has an upgraded interior, though this looked about the same as before; no criticism though, since everything feels well-made and durable.

There are also exterior cosmetics, notably a far sleeker and more upmarket grille.

But ISG on the car's junior 89bhp 1.6-litre/six-speed manual diesel powertrain is the highlight of the revamp and using Kia's new green 'EcoDynamics' sub-branding with energy-saving tyres. Ceed prices start at £13,085.

DrivingPortfolio

KIA CEED 2 CRDI ECODYNAMICS 1.6 5-DR £15,600

Driving appeal (OUT OF FIVE)	★★★★
Image	★★★
Space	★★★★
Value	★★★★★
Running costs	★★★★★
Reliability	★★★★
How green?	★★★★
Road tax	£20/year (zero year one)
Best rival	Seat Leon Ecomotive

TheVerdict

- DON'T LIKE:**
the Ceed's so-so image, even if it is great value
- NOT SURE:**
the green Ceed is worth extra when the standard is so economical already
- REALLY LIKE:**
how the Ceed highlights Kia's rapid progress and 'can do' image

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- 2003 SUZUKI GRAND VITARA 2.7 XL7 Manual, silver, 66k, 1 owner from new ~~£4,495~~ £3,995
- 2004 PEUGEOT 607 4 door saloon, 2.0 HDI Diesel, manual, silver, luxury & economy only ~~£3,995~~ £3,495
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NR

A There are two things you may have missed. Firstly, the return on the Post Office bond may not be calculated in exactly the way you think. And secondly, there is at least one rival index-linked product you might consider. The Post Office (0800 169 7500) bond is a five-year investment, with the return to savers calculated every April. So, if you invest, say, £1,000 and the retail prices index in April next year shows an annual rise of 5pc, your £1,000 will grow by 5pc plus the guaranteed 1.5pc top-up, turning it into £1,065. Now, you might think that in Year Two, your return is based on £1,065. Wrong! Your money goes back to square one. The £65 you have earned is frozen, and you start again with £1,000. The profits are paid out only at the end of the full five years. They are not compounded to earn even more as you go along. Of course, you might regard this as a small blot on an otherwise pretty landscape. After all, there are not many index-linked investments to choose from. But there is one that has a couple of advantages of its own. Yorkshire Building Society's Protected Capital Account (0845 1200 100) pays the rate of inflation plus 0.1pc – but it pays income yearly throughout its five-year life. And, unlike the Post Office bond, you can hold this account as a tax-free Isa, which adds to the attraction. So if you want to draw an income or sidestep tax, this could be a better bet.

Q I have about £7,000 in a Natwest cash Isa, earning 0.5pc. Santander is offering 3.5pc. Should I take my money out of Natwest and open a Santander account? How can one bank pay so much more than another?

A Whatever you do, don't take your Isa money from Natwest and think you can simply deposit it with Santander. If you withdraw money from an Isa, it loses its tax-free status. To stay tax-free, arrange for your existing bank to transfer the cash directly to your new bank. You must not touch it. But should you transfer? You are not really comparing like with like. The statement you sent me shows you have a cheap-and-cheerful Isa with Natwest. It has a variable interest rate that could rise if rates generally go up, you can operate it at your branch, and you are allowed instant access. The Santander leaflet you sent me offers a fixed 3.5pc, not a variable rate. You invest by post, not

TONY HETHERINGTON MONEY CLINIC



at a branch, and this is a two-year account that ties you in until 2013. If you are happy with the different terms, that's fine. But if you want the easy access that you have now, a better option might be the Halifax Isa Direct Reward account. It offers instant access, can be operated through a branch and pays 3pc interest.

Q I have a small private pension plan that matures in May. My pension provider told me I have the option to look on the open market for an annuity. I have found a company that beats my original annuity quote. As these firms must be registered with the Financial Services Authority, are there any problems I should be aware of?

A Anyone saving in a private pension plan has the right to shop around on the open market before turning their retirement savings into an annuity. The company that has managed your pension investments might not offer the best value annuity, so it is good to see that you were actually reminded that you have this right. As all annuity firms go through the same licensing checks, and are covered by the same compensation scheme, there are no hidden dangers.

Q My son banked a cheque I gave him. The money has gone from my account but has not appeared in his. His bank says it is still in the system, a week after he deposited the cheque.

A Your son's bank should show the money as available for his use from the fourth working day after he deposited the cheque. Even including a weekend would only take us up to six days, so if your son has been waiting a week, something seems wrong. He should complain to the bank and if there is no explanation, he should contact the Financial Ombudsman (0800 0234 567).

Q Are student loan repayments just based on income, or could I be made to hand over some money I have inherited?

A Repayments are linked to your income and normally collected through the tax system. Your inheritance is not affected.

■ If you have a personal-finance question, write to Tony Hetherington, MyMoney24, Prospect House, Rouen Road, Norwich NR1 1RE. We regret that neither Tony nor the MyMoney24 team can enter into personal correspondence.

Don't leave us hanging on – it's so annoying

Listening to hold music on the telephone or standing in long queues is something that winds many people up – and if it annoys you, you're unlikely to be cheered up by the revelation that we each spend an average of 33 weeks of our lives doing it. A study by the Co-operative Bank has found that the average hold time per phone call is 10 minutes. That might be frustrating enough in itself, but some callers have been left twiddling their thumbs for more than an hour-and-a-half. The top culprits for leaving customers on hold are dominated by television, internet and phone providers, domestic energy suppliers, banks and insurance companies.

The worst queues are at supermarkets, banks and post offices.

In the short term, such shabby customer service leads to anger and frustration.

Scots are apparently the least patient people when being made to wait on the phone, with callers typically hanging up after being left hanging on for about 20 minutes.

However, the research highlighted that consumers would vote with their feet if they were let down by poor service, with a third prepared to move their custom after being



PLEASE HOLD...: On average we spend 33 weeks of our lives hanging on the telephone or waiting in queues.

continually left on hold. "We've all been there, waiting on the other end of the line or stood in line when all we want to do is speak with a human being and get our problem resolved, query answered or purchase paid for,"

said Robin Taylor, head of banking at the Co-op. "However, customers don't need to put up with bad service like this. "They can always switch to an alternative provider."

Pensions changes 'a turning point'

The announcement this week that the state pensions system is to be given a complete overhaul has received a broad welcome from analysts, with one expert branding it "a turning point".

Work and pensions secretary Iain Duncan Smith said the existing system was too complex and means testing for pensioners discouraged many people from saving for retirement.

Although he did not unveil the details, there has been speculation that a single-tier pension could be worth about £140 a week. (Single people who receive the full state pension and pension credit currently get £132.60 a week.)

A move to a flat-rate state pension would remove disincentives for lower earners to build up savings, and such a change would be likely to benefit mothers, who currently lose out because of career breaks for raising children.

By ADAM AIKEN
MyMoney24 editor

Joanne Segars, chief executive of the National Association of Pension Funds, was among those welcoming the announcement. "We are at a turning point for pensions in the UK," she said. "Radical state pension reform to create a single, simple and more generous state pension could take millions of pensioners out of poverty, and provide a firm foundation for saving for old age. For the first time in a generation, people would know that it pays to save."

"This is a golden opportunity for the government to begin meeting its commitment to 'reinvigorate occupational pensions' and to get the nation saving again. This comes not a moment too soon."

The latest quarterly Real Retirement Report produced by Aviva suggested that more than two thirds of people

did not know, or overestimate, the value of the state pension.

"Simplification will help to address this confusion and could encourage customers to make plans for their own retirement," said Paul Goodwin, head of pensions marketing at the insurer.

"With greater understanding of what individuals can expect from the state, people will be better placed to plan their own private savings."

There was also support for the news from accountants.

John Nunn, senior financial planning consultant at PKF, said: "Too often, people who have taken the trouble to save extra for their pensions find that their savings make them ineligible for pension credits and other benefits – so they end up paying twice for what they have. Meanwhile, those who have not bothered to save and just rely on the state pension get everything."

In the news

Savings suffer as we pay off our debts



Best buys

Check out the best annuity rates



On the blogs

Adam Aiken:

Credit card offer could be an expensive gimmick

Taxman aiming to put a plug in the payments leak

By ADAM AIKEN
MyMoney24 editor

People who work in and around the plumbing sector are the latest to be targeted by the authorities in a clampdown on people failing to declare their earnings and pay the right amount of tax.

Under a plan announced by HM Revenue & Customs, plumbers, gas fitters, heating engineers and members of associated trades who have undeclared tax to pay can come forward until the end of May to disclose what they owe.

Most people who make full disclosures will have to pay penalties of 10pc, with maximum penalties of 20pc.

They have until the end of August to make their disclosures and arrange payment.

HMRC said it would carry out investigations after that date, targeting those who have failed to come forward and make full declarations.

Anyone caught out by that move faces a "substantial" penalty and criminal prosecution.

"Our aim is to make it as easy as possible for plumbers to come forward, make a full disclosure and benefit from a reduced penalty," said Mike Wells, director of risk and intelligence at HMRC.

"We will be using various intelligence sources to target plumbers who have not declared their full income.

"I strongly urge any in this group who think they may owe tax on their income to get in touch with HMRC and get their tax affairs in order simply, and on the best available terms.

"This is the first step in enabling those with undisclosed income or gains to avoid a full tax investigation with much higher penalties. The message is clear: contact us before we contact you."

Self-employed people who know they have made errors or omissions on their tax returns should take



CLAMPDOWN: Plumbers are the latest to be targeted in a bid to catch people failing to declare their earnings.

advantage of the amnesty, said Graham Sillett, tax partner of chartered accountants Lovewell Blake.

He said: "This is a generous offer. It is an opportunity to come clean where mistakes have been made, with penalties as low as 10pc."

Plumbers, gas fitters and heating engineers were being targeted because HMRC had obtained information from their trade organisation, but Mr Sillett said there were also indications that the amnesty could also be used by

businesses generally.

It is the third such campaign run by HMRC in recent years. People with offshore accounts as well as doctors and dentists have already been in the spotlight.

Mr Sillett said the previous campaigns had resulted in significant numbers of people coming forward to make voluntary disclosures.

■ If you want to make a tax disclosure, complete a notification form at www.hmrc.gov.uk/plumberstaxsafeplan or call 0845 600 4507.

“ This is a generous offer. It is an opportunity to come clean where mistakes have been made

Graham Sillett

Isa countdown under way

The annual fight by Isa providers to get hold of people's cash is well and truly under way, with a number of new tax-free accounts being launched recently.

Anyone over 16 is allowed to invest up to £5,100 in a cash Isa in the 2010-11 tax year, but you cannot carry the allowance over. That means there is now less than a month to use this year's allowance before it is lost for good.

The banks and other financial providers know that many of us leave it until the last moment

before taking action, which is why there is traditionally a spate of new products launched around this time.

According to Moneyfacts.co.uk, there are more cash Isas with introductory bonuses available today than at the same time in the past two years.

Introductory bonuses can make accounts very attractive, but prospective customers need to remember that the rates they pay typically plummet to uncompetitive levels once the bonus period – which usually lasts 12 months – is up.

Spending on cars to rise

The amount of money we are collectively planning to spend on cars over the next six months has hit a three-year high of £51.3bn, even though the number of people expecting to get a new or second-hand car has fallen slightly over the past half-year to 7.15 million.

The figures, compiled by Sainsbury's Finance, suggest that the average spend on a car will be about £7,170 – up more than £500 on six months ago. "Although the number of people looking to buy a car has slightly dropped, the car industry should not be disheartened as the figures in this latest index present a much more

encouraging picture for the sector than they did just 18 months to two years ago," said Steven Baillie, head of loans at Sainsbury's Finance.

"The VAT rise that came into force at the beginning of the year does not seem to be putting people off making a car purchase, and consumers appear to be realistic in knowing they are likely to need to spend a bit more."

The research also found that about one in five of those looking to buy a car will want to finance at least part of the purchase with a loan. It is thought that personal loans of £6.2bn will be advanced for this purpose over the next six months.

PICK OF THE WEEK

In association with the experts at Moneyfacts.co.uk, we highlight some of the best new products launched this week.

Savings: Barclays

Barclays has released its Golden Isa Issue 3. This instant-access cash Isa pays a rate of 3.2pc, including a 1pc bonus for 12 months. (As with any rate including an introductory bonus, savers must be aware that the rate will revert to a lower figure once the bonus period expires.) The rate is guaranteed to follow any change in the base rate until March 1, 2012. The minimum investment is £1. Transfers in are not allowed. The account is available to investors aged 16 and over and can be operated in branch. Savers can also operate this account by telephone or online but they must have existing current accounts.

Why is it good?

With a minimum investment amount of just £1 and a market leading rate, this new deal from Barclays has secured its place as one of the market-leading no-notice Isas.

Savings: Saga

Saga has increased the rate on its Three-Year Fixed-Rate Savings account, available via post only, to 4.2pc and it has launched an online-only version of the account. A monthly interest option is also available, paying 4.12pc. Savers can invest between £1 and £10m and further additions can be made whilst the issue remains open. Early access is allowed subject to penalty, depending on the account's remaining term, as follows: up to three years, 270 days; up to two years, 180 days; one year or less, 90 days. The accounts are available to savers aged 50 and over.

Why is it good?

Saga's latest product review sees a rate increase of 0.35pc to its Three-Year Fixed Rate Savings account as well as the online launch. Paying 4.2pc, these deals sit amongst the other market-leading rates. Both bonds have the flexibility for withdrawals to be made during their terms.

Mortgages: Woolwich

Woolwich (part of Barclays) has launched a fixed-rate deal costing 3.99pc to April 30, 2013. The maximum loan-to-value is 70pc and customers can borrow between £50,000 and £1m.

There is an arrangement fee of £199 and incentives of a free valuation fee for properties valued up to £2m. Remortgage borrowers can enjoy free legal fees and a £200 rebate.

Why is it good?

This fixed-rate mortgage offers customers with deposits of at least 30pc a competitive rate for two years. The deal has a small arrangement fee and a range of incentives are offered both to purchase and to remortgage borrowers. Flexible features such as the option to make overpayments and take payment holidays are also offered.

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INSIDE THIS WEEK

THE foundations of the London Array wind farm's first turbine were sunk into the Thames Estuary seabed this week, a landmark moment for the project.

When phase one is completed next year, the 175 turbines will provide enough energy to power two-thirds of Kent's homes.

With fossil fuels running low and costing more, it is encouraging to see the South East leading the way in renewable energy.

**SIMON ROBINSON**

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Enterprise zone lobby urges Osborne to act

By **MARIJKE COX**marijke.cox@kosmedia.co.uk

EAST Kent could become one of Government's flagship enterprise zones to help fuel job growth and attract new businesses in the run up to Pfizer's closure.

In what would be a revival of a Thatcher-era scheme, 10 areas of the UK could be selected as specialist zones that would benefit from company tax breaks and lenient planning rules.

Councils may also be able to keep all business rates they raise in the zones. Chancellor George Osborne said the plan – costing £100 million over four years – would help attract new business and boost employment.

Kent County Council leader Cllr Paul Carter and South Thanet MP Laura Sandys are expected to put forward a case at Whitehall pushing for east Kent to be considered as one of the 10 zones, despite speculation that northern parts of the country are being targeted.

They will use Pfizer's departure from Sandwich in 2012 and the resulting 2,400 job losses to argue their case.

Flagship

During an adjournment debate in the House of Commons this week, Ms Sandys told science minister David Willetts that east Kent, stretching along the Manston corridor, should be looked upon as a potential for the scheme.

"We would like the Government to look on this area as one of the flagship enterprise zones," she said.

Mr Willetts said the Government was focusing on all the issues surrounding Pfizer's decision to leave the Sandwich site, including the possibility of the area becoming a specialist zone.

"There is much work to be done on the exact design – to what extent it is a matter of rate relief, liberalising the planning regime or other special tax reliefs," he said.

"Both the definition of the scope for enterprise

**IN THE ZONE:** Chancellor George Osborne

zones and the choice of the areas where those will be are important. I know that the case for this area of Kent will be made powerfully."

Under the Conservative Government during the mid-1980s to early 1990s, 38 zones were established – the most famous being the redevelopment of the Isle of Dogs in London's Docklands, now Canary Wharf – but many of these lapsed back into depression after only a

few years of success.

Mr Osborne argued the new zones would focus on areas of high growth, not just physical decline.

The move gives fresh hope to politicians fighting to save the east Kent economy and the thousands of Pfizer workers at risk of losing their jobs.

Ms Sandys, who has called on ministers to press Pfizer for more time before the redundancy process starts, said the area needed Government commitment for the long term.

"We have a once in a lifetime opportunity to turn our local economy around so that in years to come my colleagues and I can proudly state, 'Yes, our area is part of the South East economy'," she said.

During the same parliamentary debate, the issue of transport was also raised. Ms Sandys said the east Kent economy had been crying out for years for better transport links.

"The area is 70 miles for London, but can take two hours to reach by train," she said.

Upgrade

"The minister [Mr Willetts] experienced a very lengthy train journey of two-and-a-half hours because of both a slow train and works on the line, so he knows that, per mile, Sandwich to London is one of the slowest routes in the country.

"I therefore ask for the Government's support for our bid to get the rail line from London to Thanet upgraded so that we can get to Thanet within the hour.

"That would revolutionise our local economy."

Mr Willetts admitted he had experienced a "painfully slow" journey on a recent visit to Sandwich and said there were some transport challenges.

He said Government would consider calls for an improved rail service between Thanet and London as well as a new station on the line.

He also touched on the significance of Manston airport to the economy.

Ms Sandys added that following Pfizer's decision to leave Sandwich, it was vital for Government to help secure investment and encourage new business start-ups on the site.

Still best placed to beat the downturn

ASHFORD business bosses say the town is booming thanks to substantial investment from both the private and public sectors.

Since the turn of the year a number of multi-million-pound companies have moved into the market town, while existing firms have also expanded. National retail giant Dobbies led the way by opening an £8 million 48,000 sq ft store at the fast-expanding Eureka Park. The move created 120 jobs.

Eureka's developers, Quadrant Estates, are now building a new phase of offices at the site, alongside junction nine of the M20.

Tesco and Sainsbury's are also preparing to invest heavily in expanding their supermarkets in the town.

Tesco will create an extra 75 jobs if it receives

the go-ahead to increase its Park Farm store from 40,000 sq ft to 55,000 sq ft, while Sainsbury's will create 350 full- and part-time jobs if it is allowed to double the size of its store at the Warren Retail Park.

Meanwhile SuperCups Vending has just cut the ribbon on a new headquarters, showroom, warehouse and distribution centre, giving it four times as much space.

The firm, which began in a garage in the town, now employs 42 people and is looking to grow its workforce further.

Ashford's Future managing director Judith Armit, pictured right, said: "Ashford continues to demonstrate we are the best place to do business. Ashford's attractiveness as a busi-

ness location is boosted by excellent road and rail links, making it one of the most accessible towns. It is reassuring to see more companies are being encouraged to expand or move into the area."

Ashford Borough Council leader Cllr Peter Wood said: "It is extremely encouraging to see many companies investing in Ashford and creating employment opportunities for the town."

"There has been significant public sector investment on infrastructure in recent years and the arrival of high-speed rail services. We are now seeing the private sector show their confidence in the town by moving to or expanding their operations here."



Comment

THE unrelenting rise of reality TV has seen an uncomfortable shift in the public's notion of celebrity. Where once it was widely accepted that genuine talent, dedication, sacrifice and hard work was needed to reach the top, now anyone can seemingly make it into the soulless and vacuous pages of the glossy magazines.

We thought we had it bad when all the boys at school wanted to be David Beckham and all the girls wanted to be Jordan. Now thousands of youngsters across the country have their hearts set on being the next Jedward or Cheeky Girls.

And why? For the perceived financial wealth that comes with fame. These bling-obsessed teens don't want to be teachers or nurses, plumbers or painters.

They want to be mega-rich pop stars, with all the associated trappings: a 20-bedroom mansion, a fleet of luxury cars, a minia-ture dog in a handbag and a vat of fake tan.

But perhaps not for much longer.

Chancellor George Osborne's Project Merlin has brought a new type of mega-rich superstar to the fore – the bankers.

The agreement between the Government and the UK's four biggest banks will disclose bonuses paid out to their top earners. Barclays' new chief executive Bob Diamond received a £6.5 million bonus for 2010. That's on top of his £250,000 salary.

And if Diamond hits future targets, his 2010 pay package could top £9m.

RBS and Lloyds, both of which were saved from going under by huge Government bail-outs, also handed out bumper bonuses to their bosses.

RBS chief Stephen Hester received £2m, while Lloyds counter-part Eric Daniels was given £1.45m.

So that's a £9m bonus if you head up a profitable bank, and £1.45 million if you don't. Not bad either way.

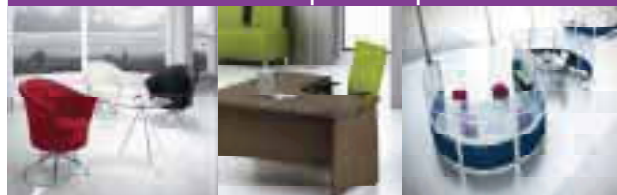
Expect to see Diamond, Hester and Daniels alongside the likes of Hollywood A-listers and Premier League footballers in the pages of the glossy magazines soon.

And kids everywhere saying: "When I grow up I want to become a hedge-fund manager for an irresponsible, Government-funded banking corporation."

Business Editor **SIMON ROBINSON**
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Slice of overseas cheese action



CANTERBURY Cheesemakers are working seven days a week to keep up with export demand.

Dairy producers say a boom in tourism combined with the weak pound has seen an increase in overseas sales – with goods packed off as far afield as China, Hong Kong, Mexico and the USA.

Jane Bowyer (pictured left), maker of the award-winning Ashmore cheeses at Dargate, has just packed wheels of four different cheeses for an artisanal baker's shop in Kuala Lumpur.

The owner saw the cheeses at the firm's counter at the Goods Shed in Canterbury, visited the dairy and now plans to feature them in his sandwiches.

Meanwhile, the Belgian town of Grez-Doiceau, near Waterloo, hopes to feature them in a food fair as part of its St George's Day festivities.

Ms Bowyer said: "We have had such a good start to the year we now have to make cheese on Sundays and have had to take on two new staff in the last couple of months to keep up with demand."

Offshore wind farm work is under way

WORK has begun on building the London Array offshore wind farm.

The first of the 177 foundations, each weighing 268 tonnes – the equivalent of 35 double-decker buses – was sunk into the Thames Estuary on Tuesday.

Once phase one of the wind farm is completed next year, 175 turbines will generate enough electricity to power 480,000 homes per year.

Tuesday's milestone was hailed by the energy firm behind the London Array project.

Anders Eldrup, chief executive of DONG Energy, said: "This is a significant milestone for London Array – off the shore and into the water."

"Soon we'll be seeing turbines going up and the wind farm starting to generate low-carbon electricity."

Dr Frank Mastiaux, chief executive of E.ON climate and renewables, said: "Installing the first foundation on schedule marks another major step in the construction of the world's largest offshore wind farm."

"It's a great moment for the team now all the detailed planning and preparation over years can finally be seen out in the water."

Dr Sultan Al Jaber, chief executive of Abu Dhabi-based joint partner



GENERATION NEXT: London Array's Cleve Hill substation, near Graveney

Masdar, said: "The installation of the first foundation demonstrates the commitment and desire to make London Array a reality, and is testament to the industry-leading resources and experience exemplified by this strategic partnership. Masdar is proud to be at the heart of this ambitious effort."

Each foundation consists of a tubular steel monopile, driven 20 to 50 metres into the seabed, and a large yellow transition piece, which is fixed

over the top of the monopile to provide the base for the turbine.

The monopiles are between 33 and 65 metres long and weigh between 200 and 650 tonnes, while the transition pieces are between 20 to 28-metres high and weigh between 245 to 345 tonnes.

London Array is being built about 20km off the north Kent coast.

If approved, the second phase will add enough capacity to bring the total to 1,000MW.

Winning a share of the spoilers

NEARLY 50 jobs have been created in Kent thanks to the launch of the new Range Rover Evoque.

Magna International, which has a base in Hartlip, near Sittingbourne, won the contract to supply bumpers, sills, rear spoilers, interior doors and rear quarter-panels.

The £400-million deal will see 46 jobs created at Hartlip and a further 90 at the firm's Merseyside base.

In total, Range Rover awarded more than £2 billion of contracts to UK companies.

Jaguar Land Rover's director of purchasing, Ian Harnett, said: "The UK's automotive supply base is truly



NEW MODEL: Range Rover Evoque world class. We demand the highest standards from suppliers.

"We focus on many aspects of supplier capability, including technology, quality, materials, environmental performance, efficiency and cost. It is testament to the excellence of compa-

nies and employees that 50 per cent of our component business is within the UK.

"The Evoque is a brand new model, so every vehicle we build is incremental volume for us and our suppliers, which is also good news for employment across the industry."

Business secretary Vince Cable also welcomed the deals. During a tour of the Merseyside factory, he said: "Jaguar Land Rover's £2 billion of contracts to businesses in the UK to supply components shows the automotive supply chain is capable of winning major contracts and creating jobs."

THE University for the Creative Arts has launched a new consultancy service offering businesses expert advice on a wide range of industries.



The Edge scheme also includes in-house training and access to the university's state-of-the-art technical facilities.

UCA research and enterprise assistant director Uwe Derksen, pictured left, said: "We have a huge pool of highly qualified and very

talented people at UCA who have a great deal to offer outside of our five campuses."

For more information, visit www.ucaedge.com.

CREATIVE agency Dandelion was the UK's sole winner at a global brand repositioning awards.

The small Smeeth-based firm picked up a Rebrand 100 trophy in recognition of their work with pharmaceutical company Martindale Pharma.

Managing director Steve Howard said: "We are absolutely delighted to have won this award. It just goes to show that with the right attitude towards branding, a small agency outside of London can still be recognised on a global scale."

"We aim to give our clients the best possible service, without the London price tag, and the fact that we are the only UK agency this year to win the award, just underlines what we always believed was possible."

SHEPHERD Neame has received a silver award in the Green Tourism Business Scheme.

The Faversham brewery was given the award after proving to be actively engaged in reducing the negative environmental and social impacts of its tourism operations.

Sheps' visitor centre manager Graham Hukins said: "We are very pleased to have received this award, which recognises the sustainable practices we have in place for the benefit of the environment, the community, visitors and the company."

"It fits in other local initiatives such as the Faversham Walks and Food and Drink Trails that Shepherd Neame supports."

SOCIAL care provider Avante Partnership held its inaugural Stars Awards night to recognise committed staff who had contributed to the organisation's success.

The partnership – which includes Avante Care and Support, Avante Community Support and Stepahead Support – was established in 1990 and is now one of the largest care providers in the South East and London.

Chief executive Cedric Fredrick said: "I felt it only seemed right that staff – past and present – should be saluted and recognised as an Avante Star, and what better way to do this than to have an awards night? From this the Stars Awards was born for a night to remember."

SMALL and medium-sized firms are being advised to get their book-keeping in order, on the eve of a Customs clampdown.

The warning was issued by TaxAssist Accountants, based in Larkfield, and comes after HMRC announced its Business Records Check campaign.

The company's Gary Richards said: "Keeping up to date with book-keeping can be a big administrative job that often becomes a burden to small businesses."

"However, keeping on top of records can lead to better management of your business and its cashflow. Plus, HMRC is less likely to take further action if your records are found to be satisfactory."

Partners' bonus spreads wealth

JOHN Lewis workers will receive an 18 per cent bonus after the group posted a 10 per cent rise in profits, *writes Simon Robinson.*

The bumper pay day will go to all of John Lewis Partnership's 76,500 full-time workers, including those at the Bluewater (1,317) and Tunbridge Wells (238) branches.

The PLC – which includes 32 John Lewis stores and 244 Waitrose supermarkets – saw profits to January 29, this year, rise £41.3 million to £431m.

Under a £194.5m Partnership Bonus deal each full-time employee, from shop assistants through to the chief executive, will be rewarded with a one-off payment equivalent to 18 per cent of their salary.

Improving

John Lewis Partnership chairman Charlie Mayfield paid tribute to the employees, known as partners, for their hard work.

He said: "Our partners have shown their commitment to continually improving what we do every day."

"The profits we make go to partners and to improving the business. I'm delighted that we've announced partners will receive a bonus of 18 per cent – an average of more than nine weeks' pay."

"In addition, we have paid £267m into our pension fund in the last year. Looking to the future, while we expect more difficult conditions for much of the year, we are confident of our plans. We will invest £600m this year and expect to create 4,300 new jobs."

One area that has already benefited from

investment is Tunbridge Wells, with the west Kent town's John Lewis at home store opening in November, 2010.

Branch manager Gabby Armstrong said: "The shop opened with a 90 per cent majority of new partners, with the total partners working here 220."

"Since opening, we experienced a buoyant Christmas and clearance period, where the team reacted fabulously to the high demand, offering an exceptional level of service – a great achievement for all our partners."

"Bonus day for us is a new and exciting experience. This will be the first time many reap the rewards of being a partner in John Lewis. It's our business and we should all feel proud of our achievements."

"I'm very proud of the team's achievement here. They are amazing, so bonus day is our time to celebrate."

John Lewis Bluewater managing director Karen Lord said: "We underwent a major refurbishment in 2009, introducing a fourth trading floor featuring one of only two food halls in the division's portfolio and a new kitchenware department."

"The success of this led to the branch finishing the full trading year at plus-12 per cent. This was a record year's trade for us and a result our partners are proud of."

"The food hall continues to get positive feedback from customers. We are looking forward to another exciting year and our partners are committed to continuing to give great service."

John Lewis saw operating profit rise 22.2 per cent to £201.2m, while Waitrose profits went up three per cent, £8.1m to £274.9m.



VISIONARY: Turner Contemporary gallery

Seeing the light during preview

TOURISM-based businesspeople have been given a sneak preview of the Turner Contemporary gallery in Margate.

More than 150 hairdressers, hoteliers, taxi drivers and restaurateurs were treated to a tour of the attraction, which opens next month.

Margate Renewal Partnership director Derek Harding said the gallery would have a positive impact on Thanet and beyond.

"It was fantastic to see so many people," he said. "This is going to be a huge boost for Margate and the whole area. We want to involve key local businesses to show them the benefits Turner Contemporary will bring."

"I think it's fair to say a number of people came along thinking one thing but left with a completely different view."

Taxi driver Hugh Brown said: "I've really changed my opinion. Turner Contemporary shouldn't be seen in isolation, but as part of a concept which will help the area."

"I haven't had much to do with art in the past. I thought I wouldn't understand it, but I didn't realise how beautiful some of Turner's works are and I'm quite impressed."

South Lodge Guest House owners Bill and Christa Hackney said: "It will do well for the area, the building is very impressive, iconic even, from the outside, but is even more impressive inside."



COUNT US IN: John Lewis partners celebrate bonus at Bluewater

Berth of profits boost

HIGHWAY Marine has gone hit in a bid to boost profits.

The Sandwich-based firm has enlisted the services of The Waypoint, which enables boat owners to book berths over the internet or via smartphone.

The online booking facility, launched at last month's London Boat Show, helps marinas maximise revenue on empty berths by advertising them on a central database.

Sailors can log in and immediately search and book a berth in their marina of choice with just a click of a button.

Highway Marine's mooring manager, James Blackmore, said: "We wanted to gain web presence for our berths and The Waypoint is a great platform to achieve this without having to invest heavily in new technology

or web advertising. We are looking forward to seeing the benefits of using it over the coming months and the ease with which sailors will be able to book berths with us."

The Waypoint co-founder Charles Bacon said: "Being web-based, we benefit from a number of advantages over the typical database or office whiteboard."

"By updating vacancies online, the whole boating world can now find out about berths. Also, because it's free for marinas to sign up for the first year, there's nothing to risk and everything to gain. A number of marinas have already signed up and we are delighted to welcome Highway on board."

Highway Marine has been providing services to sailors and boat owners since the 1970s.



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Flat-out to end eyesore



DIGGING IN: Rod Clark, with Mike Flannery, on site in Dover

THE Marpaul Group is carrying out work on a Dover development thanks to a £1.1 million NatWest Bank loan.

The Hadlow-based property developers are using the cash to turn a fire-damaged building, in Park Avenue, into 11 flats.

The project has started to take shape and will be finished by this summer.

Marpaul's managing director, Rod Clark, said: "Marpaul is a diverse business and one we are proud to say is doing extremely well in these challenging times.

"The site at Dover was an eyesore and local residents are delighted we are in the process of turning this into an attractive residential development.

Some flats will boast views of Dover Castle and will be finished to our usual high standard."

The firm has now received

NatWest funding on two projects in the last 18 months, having turned to the bank for a Hadlow farm buildings project in 2009.

Marpaul turned the Grove Farm property into student accommodation, providing 55 en-suite rooms for Hadlow College, which is just three miles away.

NatWest's Mike Flannery, who oversaw both deals, said: "Marpaul is a long-standing customer and we were delighted to be able to structure the appropriate funding for the Dover development.

"Rod has a proven track record in this field. Over the last 10 years Marpaul has completed many prestigious projects in London and the Home Counties, working with a variety of customers in the education and healthcare sectors.

"I wish him well with the Dover development and look forward to seeing the end result."

Career U-turn rediscover his

KOSmedia BUSINESS WEEK

THE BIG



INTERVIEW

Farm estate manager Oliver Doubleday made the decision to take a career U-turn while out driving in the Kent countryside. The father-of-three chose not to pursue his work as a molecular biologist and returned to Bax Farmhouse at Tonge, near Sittingbourne, to continue the business' 150-year association with his family. Mr Doubleday keeps his eye in through the East Malling Research facility and believes further food science has a big part to play in the future.

He spoke to Business Week editor Simon Robinson



Oliver Doubleday

OLIVER Doubleday says he is the man with the oil can. The 59-year-old explains that his job on his family's Sittingbourne estate is to keep things running and the wheels turning.

"I really like people to get on and I really want to facilitate that," he said. "In some ways I see myself as the guy who's there to keep an eye on things and if I see something that needs oil, then I will oil it.

"I'm not hands-on in the sense of rolling up my sleeves and driving tractors. I'm hands-on in the fact that I'm about and I'm busy, and I'm talking to people and encouraging them, trying to make it happen.

"The Brazilians have a saying that translates as, 'The farmer's eye fattens the bullock', and the English equivalent is, 'The farmer's boot is the best fertiliser'.

"It means there's nothing better than getting out and looking and seeing and mixing it up. By the same token, I try not to interfere because I've got really good people who are doing well and I don't want to introduce confusion by getting in their way."

As managing director of GH Dean and Co Ltd, Doubleday oversees the family firm's vast estate, which consists of more than 1,100 hectares of arable, 2,500 ewes and 140 hectares of fruit – apples, pears and cherries.

He began working on the farms in 1981 but it was not a given that he would continue the long father-to-son lineage.

Pointing to family portraits hung side-by-side in his unassuming Bax Farmhouse office, Doubleday explained: "I'm the son, grandson and great grandson of farmers. My family has been in farming here for more than 150 years.

"But I was trained as a molecular biologist and carried out post-doctoral research in Belgium, Holland then

briefly in the US before coming back here.

"The turning point came for me when I was driving through Kent on a beautiful spring day.

"At the time I was not unsuccessful as a biologist, but I was working very long hours and could see people like me getting divorced.

"I thought to myself, 'Do you want to end up as a professor in Paris filling in forms and funding applications?

Where's the quality of life? So I decided to come back to the farm."

The father-of-three has fused his family's business with his scientific background, taking an interest in research and development of the farming industry.



KENTISH ROOTS: Oliver Doubleday's family has been farming in county for 150 years

THIS interest has seen Doubleday take up the position of chairman at East Malling Research (EMR), the UK's principal provider of horticultural research and development.

"I had been very serious about science and I still really enjoy it, so it's great to be the chairman of EMR. I'm there to support and offer guidance, so I'm closely involved with it and get to know about what's happening.

"There's a whole range of fantastic work being done. A member of the team's recent project saw him undertake the sequencing of the strawberry genome – that's fun.

"I'm immensely proud of what EMR has achieved and quite passionate in my belief that we have to reinvest in research facilities.

"People think it's a cover for GM [genetically modified], but that's not the main game in town. There has been a clear warning on the 'perfect storm' we will soon face in terms of climate change and the need for more

food, water and energy. This needs to be addressed by good science.

"It is going to be important in future to produce food with fewer resources, less water and lower environmental impact. There is a perception that farming is getting worse in terms of pesticides and GM foods but this is just not true. We are doing it so much better now."

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INFLUENCE: With former Labour minister Hilary Benn

Doubleday says scientific research, coupled with huge advances in farming machinery and technology, had transformed the industry in a single generation.

"I'm producing three to four times more than my father used to produce and the fruit is better quality. We understand what we're doing a bit better, the fruit is hanging better on our trees and we can produce more and at a better quality – something that is genuinely necessary."

"Our customers want the fruit to be absolutely first class. In the past, quality was less of an issue as fruit was in short supply and had to be locally sourced."

"But the rate of change in the past generation has been astonishing and the one certainty for the future is uncertainty. If you look at the past and see how rapidly things have evolved, the one good bet is it's not going to stop, things will get more and more sophisticated."

The farmer, who sells his produce to the leading supermarkets, said he was pleased to see a recent resurgence in shoppers buying English, seasonal fruit.

"The UK is deficient in horticultural production – salads and veg, and apples and pears," he said.

"But our strawberries have been a great success. These growers have done an excellent job and have managed to displace imports. They have increased the season and produced really high-quality products and people have recognised that."

"I would rather our fruit was locally sourced. Often imported goods have been on long journeys and whoever bred it did it in a way more for its ability to stand up to long journeys than to give it a nice taste."

"I went to the Taste of Kent Awards and was surprised by the enthusiasm of the people and amount of buzz in the room."

"Clearly from the number of entrants it's obvious that we've got a vibrant sector in the county and people who are dedicated to providing really good food and drink. It's great."

"I'm a little part of that. We think we grow a pretty mean apple and a really nice cherry. I welcome locally produced. I think it's responsible. People should care about the quality of their food."

LIKE the Taste of Kent award nominees, Doubleday is more concerned about the quality of his products than making huge profits.

He said: "Our turnover is about £3 million, not as high as it would be if we were selling packed fruit."

Which begs the question; why don't you pack your fruit rather than pay someone else to do it for you?

"I think it's very important in life to decide not only what you do but also what you're not going to do," he said.

"I'm very clear that I'm quite busy enough with what I do at the moment and I'm not looking to do more things. I'm quite happy if I can find good people to do more things for me but that's another matter."

"Above all else we have to be excellent. If you're not in the top quartile in farming you're probably not making any profit."

"Certainly if you're not in the top half you're not making profit. I aim to be at the very, very top, which we are able to be with our arable produce."

"This is not because I'm particularly clever but we are blessed in Kent with good soil and climate. Our wheat yield is probably 20 per cent above UK average. If I was getting the average I would not be profitable and if I was at the lower end of the average I would be losing money."

"So it's very important to be very good at what you do. It's a very competitive market and I'm not just talking about my neighbour – it's a global market."

"Price pressures and these things are very acute – it's not an easy job."



GOLDEN GLOW: GH Dean and Co's estate includes 140 hectares of fruit



OLIVER DOUBLEDAY CV

- Managing director of family's estate: 1,150 hectares of arable, 590 hectares of grass for 2,500 ewes, 140 hectares of fruit
- Working on the farms since 1981
- Involved in the management of an 85-hectare rubber plantation, owned by wife, Maria, in São Paulo, Brazil
- Trustee of the Brogdale Horticultural Trust
- Chairman of East Malling Research, since 2006
- Local director for Kent of the NFU Mutual, since 2005

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Eyes on the prize for IoD's shortlisted trio

By **SIMON ROBINSON**

simon.robinson@kosmedia.co.uk

THREE Kent business bosses have been shortlisted for an Institute of Directors' prize.

The efforts of Kevin Kneebone, Nicky Pearson and Steve Martin have all been recognised ahead by the IoD's London and South East Director of the Year awards.

The trio will learn their fate at a gala dinner in London on Tuesday, March 22.

Kneebone, managing director at landmine clearance firm BACTEC International has been nominated in the international business up to £24.99 million category.

During his eight years with the Rochester-based business he has moved control of the company to a board of directors but also found the time to get his hands dirty in the field.

"I like to lead from the front and set an example," he said. "Recently I was in the middle of the Baltic Sea working on a project disposing of unexploded ordnance with leading edge in-house technology developed by BACTEC. I'll shortly be heading off to the Middle East to do the same."

Pearson founded The Beauty Works in Dartford in 1993. The managing director has



ALL SMILES: Steve Martin and (inset) Kevin Kneebone have been shortlisted

been shortlisted in the £5m to £24.99m category. The company designs and commissions the manufacture of consumer health, fitness and electrical beauty products and clients include Tesco, Asda, Next, Sainsbury's, Wilkinsons, Aldi and New Look.

Having survived the 2008 collapse of another major client, Woolworths, the company now boasts a turnover of £5 million and 10 staff.

"We believe we can do anything any of our clients ask of us," said Pearson. "There is no hierarchy here, everyone contributes with

ideas and we are constantly moving forward. As a result we can move and respond much quicker than our bigger competitors."

Martin is in the running for Director of the Year for companies with a turnover of up to £4.99m.

He founded Xmo Strata in 2002 and has grown it into one of the UK's leading sign installation and maintenance companies, with clients including BP, Shell, Esso and Chevron.

True to his desire to establish the safest and best-quality service provider in the field, he has refused to cut back on staff training and development during the recession and encourages his teams to take the lead.

He said: "I like my staff to give me solutions. I couldn't fit a sign in a million years so if we are looking at a new procedure I'll get four or five people together and we'll try it, take suggestions, try it again and agree the best way."

The IoD awards are sponsored by PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The firm's South East regional leader, John Minards, said: "This year we received a record number of entries and the calibre of the nominations was incredibly high."

"All the finalists have demonstrated best in class performance and we would like to congratulate them on reaching this stage."



NICKY PEARSON:
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JOIN THE TEAM: Ideal Waste Paper Co's move into Kent has created 60 jobs

A PURPOSE-built recycling depot has opened in Swanley, creating 60 jobs.

The Ideal Waste Paper Co has invested £14 million in the ultra-modern depot, which will also serve as the firm's new headquarters.

Managing director Kenny Thew said: "We have planned for years to relocate to premises where we can expand our business."

"Our new Kent facility, near the M25, will offer local authorities and major account-holders significant benefits for recycling across the south."

"We are committed to the development of a sustainable environment and actively encourage industry to exploit the potential for recycling."

Kent County Council's deputy leader, Cllr Alex King, said he was pleased the firm had chosen to move into the county.

"We are delighted Ideal Waste Paper has decided to invest in our county and help our local authorities progress with their recycling commitments."



IMPRESSIVE: New depot at Swanley

Locate in Kent chief executive Paul Wookey said: "It's exciting that Ideal Waste Paper chose Kent for its impressive facilities."

"We're pleased to have been able to assist the company by introducing it to Kent-based businesses, which will continue to provide support."

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Sparkling jewel in port's crown

By **SIMON ROBINSON**simon.robinson@kosmedia.co.uk

AN ELEGANT seafront hotel is set to reopen after being restored to its original Regency splendour.

The 81-bedroom Best Western Dover Marina Hotel and Spa has undergone a multi-million-pound renovation and now boasts three conference rooms, a restaurant and bar, seafront coffee shop and ice cream parlour and a fitness and spa centre.

The hotel, which takes up a large mid-section of the five-storey Grade II-listed Waterloo Crescent terrace, is being run by Leaf Hotels, which operates two other hotels in east Kent.

Sixty jobs have been created at their latest hotel.

Leaf Hotels general manager David Otteson said he was delighted with the results of the six-month restoration project.

"The hotel is the jewel in Dover's crown, with breathtaking views across the beach and the harbour to the Channel and beyond to France," he said.

"Thanks to its fusion of 21st-century comfort and 19th-century styling, the hotel is full of character and charm. With excellent access to ferry and cruise terminals, it's ideal for business and leisure.

"This is a wonderful place to stay, an ideal base to enjoy the delights of Kent, or a day trip to France and Belgium."

The hotel boss also praised the quality of the refurbishment work undertaken by award-winning interior design practice Nicholas Hollinshead Interiors.

He said: "The brief was to blend the original 1830s features with modern-day facilities and

**FINE DINING:** The refurbished restaurant

the result is stunning. Wallpapers, carpets and furniture have been sourced from all over the world to make this one of the most stylish hotels in Kent. We are all thrilled with the outcome."

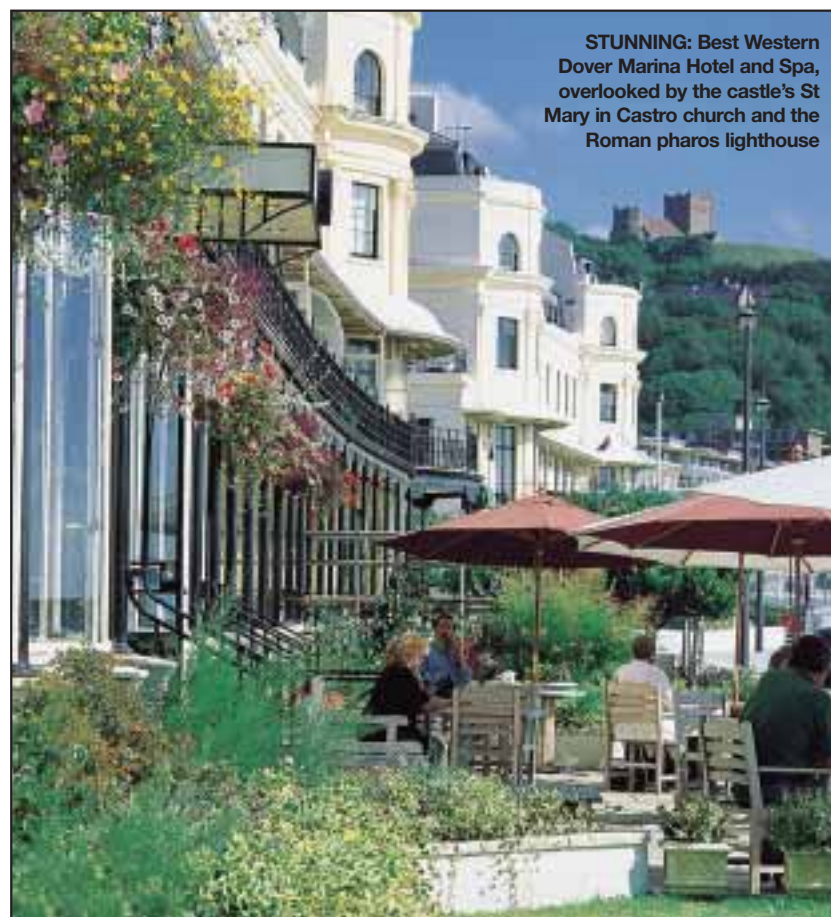
Tourism champion Visit Kent's chief executive, Sandra Matthews-Marsh, said the hotel will be a boost to the county's tourism industry.

"They are to be congratulated for having the vision, dedication and commitment to deliver such an exciting project," she said.

"The hotel is a welcome addition to the hospitality sector. The county needs additional high-quality bed stock and the Best Western Dover Marina Hotel and Spa offers just that."

The hotel, formerly known as the Churchill, caters for weddings, meetings and conferences, plus theme nights, fine dining parties and private dining.

It will be officially reopened on Thursday, March 24.

**STUNNING:** Best Western Dover Marina Hotel and Spa, overlooked by the castle's St Mary in Castro church and the Roman pharos lighthouse

Towering success at castle

LEEDS Castle's newly-restored private function wing has proven a huge success – with wedding bookings alone at a four-year high.

The historic castle's Maiden's Tower has been converted into a multi-purpose conference facility and also boasts five bedrooms with en-suite bathrooms.

The Tower, which played host to movie-star parties in the 1920s and '30s and was the setting for secret political discussions during World War Two, was reopened in its current guise in October, last year.

Leeds Castle's hospitality business manager Debbie Matthews said feedback had been overwhelmingly positive.

"It's going really well," she said. "The facilities have been well received. The Tower appeals to different markets. Wedding bookings are buoyant – the highest in four years – but corporate bookings have also been high thanks to the two flexible support rooms we can offer.

"The great thing is that we're yet to see just how fantastic the Maiden's Tower can be. Once the summer comes we can get the most out of the private garden. We're really pleased

with the response."

Built in the early 12th century to replace the earlier Saxon manor of Esledes, Leeds Castle was later home to a succession of kings and queens.

Perhaps its most famous owner was Henry VIII, who spent lavishly to transform the castle from a rugged fortress into a royal palace and was responsible for much of its splendour.

He ordered the construction of the Maiden's Tower in about 1544 in preparation for the visit of his first queen, Catherine of Aragon, to house the royal maids of honour.

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NEXT WEEK: Business Week Spotlight on Business Fleet

Skinner to miss worlds in bid for Olympics place

IN-FORM athlete Mike Skinner has turned down a call-up to run at the World Cross Country Championships in favour of a training camp he hopes will help boost his Olympic ambitions.

The 31-year-old runner left for Kenya this week ahead of a month training at altitude with his training group, which includes British middle-distance star Andy Baddeley.

It took precedence for Skinner over an appearance for Great Britain at the world championships, which are held in Spain next weekend.

The Blackheath & Bromley Harriers athlete was picked for the squad after finishing second at the trials last weekend. He was also runner-up at the national cross-country championships last month, marking a successful return from an Achilles problem which ruled him out for a large part of last year.

Skinner is pleased with his recent form and believes the trip to east Africa will be more beneficial.

He said: "I spoke to my coach and without wanting to sound big-headed, I have been to five World Cross Country Championships and didn't see how much there was to be gained by going to another one."

Skinner is aware time is running out for him to make an impact at major championships. He is hopeful extra preparation this winter will pay off, with qualification for the 10,000 metres at the London Olympics next year the ultimate goal.

Skinner said: "I've got to be realistic and start thinking about the Olympics. If I harbour dreams of getting there I need to get near the target times this year. It will be tough, but I've just got to try and run personal bests and see where that takes me."



Picture: BROWLEY & BECKHAM

Duo join the cue for Crucible spot

A PLACE at the World Snooker Championships awaits Kent's top two players if they can successfully navigate qualifying this weekend.

Barry Hawkins and Gerard Greene are one win away from taking their place among the planet's best players at the Crucible next month.

Both have had average seasons to date, but the amount of ranking points available in Sheffield means a run to the latter stages can define a career.

Dartford's Hawkins is bidding to reach the first round for the sixth successive season and is likely to face four-time Crucible quarter-finalist Anthony Hamilton. Greene, based in Rainham, is on course to meet fellow veteran Dave Harold.

Both matches, held at the English Institute of Sport in Sheffield, will be played over sessions Sunday morning and evening. The first player to win 10 frames will progress to the main draw.

By DAVID PRITCHARD

IT TOOK just a couple of corners for Mike Conway to shrug off the memory of his horrific crash at Indianapolis last year when he finally returned to the track this week.

The low-key return at Homestead Raceway in Florida on Monday came almost 10 months on from smashing into the barrier at 220 miles per hour during the latter stages of the Indy 500.

It has been an arduous return to fitness for the 27-year-old. Long hours of rehabilitation in the gym were needed to recover from back and leg injuries, the most serious of his career.

Now fully recovered, Conway also put in some hot laps at Sebring Raceway on Wednesday ahead of a two-day official IndyCar test in Alabama next week.

The racer from Sevenoaks admitted there were a few nerves getting back behind the wheel again, but they disappeared in a matter of seconds.

"You do all your work as much as you can in the gym, but it's a bit unknown until you get in and drive, but after a couple of corners I knew it was fine and I was straight back into it," he said. "After 10 months it was great to be back."

"It all went well. There were a lot of ticks in the boxes and I got a few laps in. I was on top of it after a lap or two and it felt great for all that hard work to pay off."

"It's been a long time, the longest I've had, but I've been keeping busy training. In terms of how I drive it's all the same. I think it makes you stronger coming back from something like this, for sure, and I'll be pushing hard to get some good results this year."

The sessions were Conway's first chance

BACK ON TRACK:
Mike Conway



Driver delighted as he returns to Indy circuit after crash that nearly claimed his life

Conway turns big corner on the road back

to impress his new team, after moving to Andretti Autosport from Dreyer & Reinbold Racing last month. The switch will see the former GP2 driver racing for one of IndyCar's top outfits and he is hopeful of challenging at the front of the grid from the first race of the season later this month.

He said: "It's good to have a bigger team like this and we can definitely get some good

results. It's a case of working hard during the season and results will come – it would be nice to get that first win under my belt."

"I would like to think I will compete straight away. It's never easy being in one of the top teams, but things have gone well so far. It's a really great bunch of people."

The season starts with the Honda Grand Prix of St Petersburg, Florida, on March 27.

Kent show promoter hoping it will be all fight on the night

THE STAGE is set for a big night of boxing in Kent next week with a full bill of fighters finally lined up for the much-anticipated Medway Park show on Friday, writes Steve Tervet.

Mark Roe, the show's promoter, saw the event postponed three times last year and was only this week able to complete the promised eight-bout line-up.

The biggest headache Roe faced was securing an opponent for headline act Tom Dallas, with the Chatham heavyweight topping the bill as part of his climb up the national rankings.

However, Dallas is now preparing to fight Hungary's Gabor Farkas and Roe admitted he was relieved to have everything in place with the show now just five days away.

"It's not been easy, but the board have finally accepted [Farkas] as an opponent," he said. "This will be the last six-round fight Tom has. He'll move up after this fight, start to move up against higher-ranked opponents."

"In some respects, though, the relief can be a false screen because all sorts can happen in the next week. So many times, I've seen one or two guys pull out and that's when it gets hard because there are other shows going on around that time."

Roe expects Gavin Tait's rematch against Danny Dontchev to keep the crowd entertained, with the Sheppey welterweight keen to set the record straight after suffering a questionable points defeat when the pair fought in January.

Light-heavyweight Dan Woodgate, from Minster in Thanet, will take on Elvis Dube, less than two weeks after beating Jody Meikle



BIG BILL: Kent fighters Tom Dallas (main picture), Scott Woolford (top left), Vinny Woolford (above left) and Dan Woodgate (above right) Woolford and Woodgate pictures: STEVE EASTMENT

in London. Scott Woolford, meanwhile, returns to the ring for the first time since October, with the Ramsgate middleweight expecting a close contest against Jay Morris.

Woolford's older brother, light-welterweight Vinny, has been pitted against Gavin Putney,

while Crayford's Louis Petitt will fight Pavel Fenkobs.

Sussex fighters Nicky Jenman and Ross Payne complete the bill as they go up against Ricky Poulter and Beki Moyo respectively.

Gates open at Medway Park at 6pm.

Golf club hotel plans given the green light

Decision opens door for course's return to big stage

By **DAVID PRITCHARD**

A PROJECT set to transform the London Golf Club into a major force in European golf has taken a big step towards reality after planning permission was agreed for an on-site hotel.

After a process spanning 15 months since the original application, Tonbridge and Malling council considered the proposal last week. The planning committee granted permission, subject to conditions being met, for a complex including a 130-bedroom hotel with accompanying leisure and conference facilities.

Work will not begin until the remaining details are ironed out, but it is thought an agreement could be reached in a matter of weeks.

Austen Gravestock, general manager at the London Club, near Ash, said: "There is a lot more to do but as a club we are very pleased with the result following the planning meeting."

Crowds

The construction plans are crucial to the club's hopes for the future. Although it hosted events on the main European Tour in 2008 and 2009 and attracted huge crowds, the lack of off-course facilities have hindered its chances of staging further high-profile tournaments.

Despite the course's ideal location near London with excellent transport links, the European Tour increasingly expects to accommodate players and sponsors at the host course.

It played a direct role in the club's bid to host the 2015 Solheim Cup, women's golf's equivalent of the Ryder Cup. The London Club's proposal was highly praised by the Ladies European Tour (LET), but Forest Pines in Lincolnshire was picked as the UK's top bid.



Picture: ADY KERRY



Mark Casey, European Solheim Cup director at the LET, said: "One of the significant reasons for your submission not being given Preferred UK Bid status was that whilst you have submitted planning application to build a hotel, this has still to be approved."

"We therefore felt that we could not take the risk of appointing a venue without such guarantee and have appointed another venue

AMBITIOUS: Artist's impression of the new London Club hotel and (left) the European Open, last held at the course in 2009

which does have an appropriate hotel and ancillary facilities onsite."

The European Tour was one of several influential voices in favour of the plans, along with the English Golf Union and the leader of Kent County Council, Cllr Paul Carter.

In addition to the increased profile brought by staging big events, the club claims the hotel will create more than 300 jobs and contribute £21 million a year to the local economy.

But there was significant opposition to the plans, with several neighbouring parish councils and groups such as the Protect Kent branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England arguing it was an inappropriate development in Green Belt land.

In making its decision the committee felt the potential wider benefits outweighed the environmental concerns.



VICTIM: Clarence Harding was blinded

Maidstone face the drop over gouge horror

MAIDSTONE Rugby Club will be relegated at the end of the season after abandoning their appeal against the Rugby Football Union's decision to dock them 50 league points.

The deduction, along with a £2,000 fine, was handed down to the club as punishment for the incident, which blinded Gravesend player Clarence Harding in his right eye.

Harding suffered the injury during a Kent Cup tie at The Mote in January last year and the RFU ruled he had been deliberately eye-gouged by a Maidstone player following a disciplinary hearing in November.

While Maidstone player Matt Iles was found not guilty of the offence, the club were held responsible for the actions of their players and sanctioned for conduct prejudicial to the interests of the game at a second hearing in January this year.

Still contesting the decision to punish them for the actions of an unknown player, Maidstone appealed the decision before pulling out of the process last week.

The club released a statement, which read: "Whilst we accept the RFU disciplinary regulation that a club is responsible for its players, we believe that it was never intended to be interpreted and applied to situations involving players or players unknown, where the club is not aware that any act of foul play has taken place."

"The RFU did not accept our argument and given these two factors formed the basis of our submission, we found ourselves in an untenable position and subsequently saw no point in continuing the appeal."

Maidstone are mid-table in London 2 South East, but the points deduction will send them bottom, well adrift of safety with only three league games after this weekend.

COUNTDOWN TO THE OPEN

123 DAYS UNTIL THE OPEN – THE NUMBER OF YARDS THAT MAKE UP 'THE POSTAGE STAMP', THE NOTORIOUSLY DIFFICULT EIGHTH HOLE AT ROYAL TROON THAT IS THE SHORTEST ON ANY OPEN COURSE



PGA pro to give inside story on The Open

WITH just four months to go until The Open Championship arrives at Royal St George's, Archant KOS Media has teamed up with a PGA professional to bring you closer to the action.

Chris Aked grew up on Kent's golf courses and now works as a professional at Royal Blackheath.

Together with KoS, the 27-year-old will be providing an in-depth look at a range of topics in the build-up to the tournament in Sandwich, which begins on July 14.

He said: "I think we have a great opportunity with The Open coming to Kent for the first time since 2003. It's a chance as a region to reach out and get people involved in the sport. Hopefully we'll be able to provide something that won't be seen anywhere else."

In the next few weeks we will be looking at how the course is set up, what it takes to succeed at Royal St George's and who may figure in the battle for the Claret Jug.

Aked will also give readers a first-hand account inside the ropes as he joins the hope-



Picture: ADY KERRY

INSIGHT: Chris Aked will provide in-depth information on the Open at Royal St George's

fuls looking to come through regional qualifying to earn the right to tee up alongside the world's best players.

He is likely to play at the London Golf Club, near Ash, which will host regional qualifying for the first time in June.

"The chance of reaching Royal St George's is slim but it's not beyond the realms of possibility," he said. "In the back of your mind you do have thoughts of what could be at the end of the journey and I'll be working hard before then to give myself the best chance."

Duo picked for Scotland clash

KENT rugby duo Cath Spencer and Rachael Burford have been recalled to the England team for Sunday night's Six Nations clash with Scotland at Twickenham.

Spencer (pictured), the former Folkestone number eight, relinquished the captaincy after leading England to the World Cup final last year and has started the last two games on the bench.

Meanwhile, ex-Medway centre Burford is in line for her first start of the championship when the women's side take to the field immediately after the men's Calcutta Cup fixture.

A Spencer try helped England beat New Zealand on their previous Twickenham appearance in 2009 in front of a 12,000-strong crowd. The Red Roses go into Sunday's game needing two wins to retain the Grand Slam.



Pictures: IGOR KUPCO



FRONT-RUNNERS: Herne Bay are out in the lead with Hythe their nearest rivals

Bay and Town battling it out for title glory

NON-LEAGUE FOCUS

THE RACE to be crowned Kent League champions is looking increasingly like a straight fight between two of the division's nearly-men.

Midweek victories for Hythe Town and Herne Bay saw the duo break free at the top before this weekend's fixtures.

The next few weeks represent a huge opportunity for both to end long waits for Ryman League football.

Hythe have finished in the top half in seven of the last eight years, a period which has also seen Bay twice end the campaign as runners-up.

The pair have applied to the Football Association for promotion, if they were to win the league. Third-placed Erith Town did not apply, so represent a red herring in the promotion race, while Greenwich Borough and VCD Athletic – the only other candidates – would need a stellar finish to threaten the top two.

Bay manager Simon Halsey believes mental strength is the key to coming out on top.

He said: "Every game's massive now. It's pretty much the first one to buckle will find it's very costly. I believe it's down to the managers at this stage and whether they can keep the players calm and positive."

Hythe have had to do it the hard way. A memorable FA Cup run to the first round proper left them with a healthy bank balance, but plenty of ground to make up.

A run of 11 wins in 13 league games meant they went into the weekend on top with a better goal difference and a game in hand, but they still have to visit Bay next month. It leaves Scott Porter, Town's boss, expecting drama.

He said: "It will go down to the wire, I'm sure of that and there will be a few more twists and turns before the end of the season. We just have to concentrate on what we're doing. I want us to stay at the top now, not just be there for one week."



CONSISTENT: Hythe have finished in the top half in seven of the last eight seasons

Palmer desperate to play his part for Gills

Crooked midfielder aims to be fit for run-in

Picture: ADY KERRY



SIDELINED: Chris Palmer is recovering from a long-term knee injury

By **DAVID PRITCHARD**

FORGOTTEN midfielder Chris Palmer is hopeful of making a return for Gillingham before the end of the season as he looks to step up rehabilitation from the worst injury of his career.

A routine block tackle in training halted the midfielder's campaign in November. It took several weeks for the knee injury to be correctly diagnosed and it was not until mid-January that he underwent keyhole surgery to remove soft cartilage from the problem joint.

Holes were then drilled into the bone to allow the injury to heal, but it has taken almost two months for the 27-year-old to be able to fully flex his leg. With that hurdle out of the way Palmer can begin work on an exercise bike and if all goes well, he could be back in training before the end of the month.

With injuries few and far between in his career before this season, it has been a frustrating time, but the former Derby County trainee is looking to get back in the Gills side for the run-in.

Palmer said: "It was hard at the beginning not knowing what was wrong and why I could-

n't bend my leg properly. Now I'm feeling positive that I will be back before the end of the season. If it is longer then so be it, but there's only 10 games left and I want to be involved. It's a big incentive for me to get back and hopefully help us get promoted."

Injuries never come at a good time for players, but Palmer has cause to feel particularly aggrieved. After an indifferent first season at Priestfield where he struggled to establish himself, Palmer made big strides at the start of this campaign.

One of the first names on the team sheet in the opening months of the season, he remains third on the Gills' top scorers list and joint top in the assists ranking, despite missing the last 18 games.

The blow is more keenly felt with Palmer out of contract at the end of this season. He is keen to stay at Priestfield and is hopeful his form before the injury will convince manager Andy Hessenthaler he is worthy of a new deal.

Palmer said: "I don't tend to worry about these things, but I feel as though I did enough while I was playing to show the gaffer what I can do."

"I understand it's hard to make a decision because there's lots of players out of contract and the club don't know which division they'll be in next season. All I'm doing is concentrating on getting myself fit and hopefully the contract takes care of itself."

Rook turns down Conference Premier side to rejoin Angels

CARL Rook turned down the chance to play in the Conference Premier to rejoin Tonbridge Angels on a loan deal to the end of the season, **writes Glenn Pearson.**

The striker, who left Tonbridge last season to join Dartford, was loaned back to the Angels last week and started in the two recent draws against Kingstonsian and Wealdstone.

Rook admitted he was surprised at the speed of the move back to Longmead having been told last Tuesday by Dartford boss Tony Burman that he needed to go out on loan and get some games.

Conference Premier side Eastbourne Borough had expressed an interest, as had Carshalton Athletic, but when Angels boss Tommy Warrilow came calling, there was only one place the former Horsham man was going.

"Tony Burman told me I was going out on loan on the Tuesday and by Thursday I was back at Tonbridge," Rook said. "It was quite a surprise to me if I'm honest, but there are three strikers at Dartford fighting for one place and I've been in and out of the

side. The manager said that I needed to get out and get some games and I agreed. I made the decision to go back to Tonbridge, which was an easy one really; they're pushing for promotion so hopefully I can score some goals to get us there."

The 28-year-old scaffolder admitted the prospect of playing in the Conference Premier with Eastbourne Borough had appealed, but having looked at away trips to Wrexham, Gateshead and Southport in the next few weeks, work commitments ruled it out.

With Rook out of contract this summer, promotion for Tonbridge could see the striker join permanently, although he hasn't ruled out staying at Princes Park.

He said: "It's a shame if it has not worked out at Dartford, whether the manager sees something in me he does not like, I don't know."

"I'm out of contract in the summer, but it's up to other people with what happens. I really enjoy playing at Tonbridge and I enjoyed my time at Dartford, so there's a lot to weigh up at the end of the season."



LOAN: Dartford's Carl Rook has rejoined Tonbridge until the end of the season

Pictures: DAVE COLDRIDGE and SPORTSHOTZ.CO.UK

EVERYONE involved in grassroots football is being given the chance to have their say on how the game is run in the county.

The Big Grassroots Football Survey launches Monday and runs for a fortnight, giving players, referees, coaches and supporters an opportunity to air their opinions on a wide range of topics.

Have your say on grassroots game

Paul Dolan, chief executive at the Kent County Football Association, said: "We're looking for the voice of local football people to tell us how we're doing."

"Also, importantly, we want to know what people involved in the game think

still needs to be done to keep the grassroots game heading in a positive direction."

The survey can be filled in online at www.kentfa.com and copies are available by contacting the Kent FA on 01622 792140.



Kent contracts still undecided

Talks over for now after Denly and Northeast fail to put pen to paper

Pictures: ADY KERRY

By **GLENN PEARSON**

CONTRACT negotiations with Kent's Joe Denly and Sam Northeast have ended with neither batsman having signed new deals.

The two Kent Academy graduates are out of contract at the end of the season and have declined extension offers put to them this winter. Those deals are now off the table and are unlikely to be formally discussed until June, when the county are obliged to indicate whether or not they intend to sign the duo. If that's not the case, other counties are made aware and can put in approach to speak to them about joining their club.

Chief executive Jamie Clifford told Kent on Sunday: "We have come to the end of the renegotiation period. Dialogue continues with all players, even those in contract, and the door is always open for any player to come and talk about their futures."

"If a player came in tomorrow and said 'I want to extend my contract', then of course we would look at it. We are where we are and I don't think there is going to be any more movement before now and the start of the season, which does really then take us to the June timetable and we'll see what happens."

"We wouldn't want to take it down to

the wire, but by June the club would need to give an indication whether we plan to sign them, if not the player gets the chance to speak to other counties."

Several other players are out of contract this season, including Simon Cook, Robbie Joseph, Azhar Mahmood, James Goodman and Dewald Nel. It's expected the county will monitor their progress during the season before deciding to offer any extensions, but it's Denly and Northeast's situation that will cause the most alarm for the club's members and supporters.

While they had relatively disappointing seasons with the bat last year, Denly scoring just 610 championship runs and Northeast 688, both have progressed through the Kent system and have been touted in the past as having the potential to play Test cricket.

Clifford is hopeful the pair will sign new contracts when discussions re-open later on this summer.

"I'm disappointed but only in the sense that their futures are not nailed down," he said. "There is hope they will stay with the county and score lots of runs – if it takes a bit longer to come to that conclusion then so be it. It's not a disaster because they are in contract and can't talk to anybody else and we hope to retain their services."

"We have reached the end of our discussions for now and they will re-open such time as is appropriate."



STALLED: Joe Denly (top) and Sam Northeast (above) will have to wait until June to restart negotiations for new contracts

Steps taken to stop county living 'beyond its means'

KENT chief executive Jamie Clifford has vowed to take steps to address the club's financial situation after the county announced another six-figure operating loss for the last financial year.

A trading loss of £595,000 was significantly less than the £802,452 from the previous year, but it still prompted treasurer Simon Philip to say the club continues to live "well beyond its means" in his honest assessment of the accounts.

The biggest hit came in match receipts, commercial revenue and catering, with a total loss of £465,000. The club did, however, make a profit of just over £3.5 million, although that came from the sale of two parcels of land at St Lawrence for £4.1 million, which will help pay for the redevelopment project.

"The accounts don't lie, they tell an accurate story and I think there are two stories within that," Clifford said. "The very positive thing is money is coming in and the project is underway, while the underlying thing is the operating losses, which we continue to work hard on."

"There is no way of accepting that as a way to run a business, we can't carry on like this and we are going to have to take steps to address those underlying issues. We hope the investment in the infrastructure will address the revenue driving side of the business, and we don't have to make those nasty horrible cuts that almost every organisation has been going through."

Kent, too, made cuts – six players left and two off-field staff were made redundant, in operations and catering – which brought about a saving of £338,000.

Unsustainable

As a result, the county's future prosperity lies in generating revenue, now a realistic possibility with upgraded facilities at St Lawrence, rather than cutting costs – which Clifford feels would make running a cricket club unsustainable. Steps have already been made in addressing the key areas to help generate revenue, which included de-stocking the club shop and renegotiating a deal with the landlords at Beckenham.

"Since we have been at Beckenham, from

day one we have lost money there," Clifford said. "We've now gone back to the landlords and said this is unsustainable and we've now managed to come to a rearrangement."

"We remain committed to being there, considering it works. We'll see how it goes this year. It's an important thing to be a county cricket club and have a northern base."

A club record £2 million was spent on cricket in 2009/2010, which includes nearly £1.5 million on player salaries.

Asked whether that can be sustained, Clifford said: "It depends how we do revenue generation wise, the pressure is on to get bums on seats and generate commercial revenue. If those at worse help us break even then we can remain as committed to cricket as we've always been."

"I think if we can get a feel good factor around the ground then that will impact on the playing side as well."

"The message is to get people to re-engage with county cricket and that's an exciting part of what we're involved in, because we've got something to show people."

Return to the great outdoors

OUTDOOR training begins at Kent next week with the majority of the squad reporting back fit ahead of the new campaign.

James Tredwell is the only major absentee as he remains with the England squad at the ICC World Cup, while batsman Daniel Bell-Drummond and left-arm seamer Adam Ball will miss the opening weeks of pre-season as they are still at school.

Ashley Shaw, who signed a two-year contract during the winter, is the only player to report back with an injury. The fast bowler suffered a recurrence of his shin injury while away training in Australia, but director of cricket, Paul Farbrace, is confident the 19-year-old won't require further surgery and anticipates an early season return.

Robbie Joseph, who missed the majority of last season with a shoulder injury, has returned injury-free after a month in Australia and should be fit to play in the opening game against Essex on April 8.

The players were called in for a fitness test on Friday ahead of net training on the St Lawrence grass, which begins on Monday, as the players gear up for pre-season games against Lancashire and Sussex.

Farbrace said the fixtures would be used for practice in the middle and that a more detailed pre-season programme has been put together so the players are ready for the early start to the new campaign.

He said: "Pre-season is an important time. We have added a little bit more cricket than last year, starting with the three-day game against Lancashire at Beckenham. We were supposed to play Somerset and had that inked in from September and then at the end of January they rang and said 'sorry we can't do it' and let us down, which is pretty poor. They did the same last year."

"Lancashire stepped in and that's perfect for us. We are going to try and play a two-day game and a one-day game and then we have Sussex coming for a one-day game on April 5 before starting the season against Essex at Chelmsford."

"With that slightly smaller squad, while we could do with a bit more bowling help, on the other hand it will focus the mind and everyone will be working towards the opening games of the season."



PRE-SEASON: Paul Farbrace

JUST RELEASED

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Spring/Summer edition

Changes to SEN provision: a real step forward?

■ BY NICK AMES

THE way in which the country's education system deals with children who have Special Educational Needs (SEN) is to be reformed.

The Government says that the current process by which parents get help if their child has a learning disability is too complex.

There is also the suggestion that too many children with minor problems are being diagnosed as SEN at school.

Children's Minister Sarah Teather told the BBC: "We have heard time and time again that parents are frustrated with endless delays and by being caught in the middle when local services don't work together."

The Government's Green Paper, published on Wednesday, also wants charities, teachers and parents' groups to open independent 'free schools' specially tailored for pupils with special needs; it also seeks better training for teachers.

However, Gravesend education expert Peter Read, who gives parents independent advice about their children's schooling, has doubts that the changes will lead to any genuine improvement.

He said: "The biggest problem that we have at the moment is a lack of specialists who support these children – such as speech therapists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists and all the other health professionals



A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER?
Children's Minister Sarah Teather and Kent education expert Peter Read

that the schools simply can't get hold of now.

"It [the Government] talks about charities taking a greater role in helping children with special needs, but I am not sure that they have the capacity to do it at the moment."

In an environment in which the Government is also cutting funds to charities, there is mounting criticism that it is asking them to do more with less money.

Despite his reservations about the announced reform, Mr Read does welcome the commitment to making the assessment process simpler.

At present, doctors, child psychologists, schools and social services must all be consulted before support can be provided.

He said: "The changes are clearly intended to get rid of the vast bureaucracy that parents of children with special needs have to struggle through. I know of some parents who have to deal with 14 different professionals.

"It can take two years to get a state-

ment. There really is massive red tape around the whole situation."

As part of its planned changes, the Government wants to abolish the 'statement of special needs' that gives parents a legal document outlining how their children should be helped and a choice of school they would like their child to attend.

Only some 2 per cent of children qualify for a statement leading to a place in a special school. Most children end up in mainstream schools that offer SEN support.

Mr Read said: "Often children with SEN in mainstream schools do not get the help they need because the school cannot offer it to them and there is no legal right to access it.

"We could be moving to a situation where children will not have any legal rights and it will be left to schools to make decisions according to their budgets."

The new system, in which children will be assessed just once, will be piloted before being introduced nationally.

In Kent the number of children designated with SEN has increased in the last four years, and the county council is creating more SEN units attached to mainstream schools for children with problems like autism and speech-and-language difficulties. Tonbridge and Sittingbourne are two towns to have such units.

Mr Read said: "It is an indication of KCC's commitment to children with SEN, which I support.

"There is no doubt that there is need for reform, but it is a massively complex area. The last time it was changed, it led to the bureaucracy that we have now."



Students' art transforms city's disused underpass

STUDENTS from Canterbury's University of the Creative Arts have been transforming one of the city's eyesores.

The disused and boarded-up underpass across the road from the bus station is the unlikely venue for an exhibition entitled Origins.

Artist Georgia Buckland, above, said: "Everybody who comes down here is interested in how we have used this space. They are happy to see it being brought back into use.

"Some of the work chosen for the exhibition includes sound-installation, an abstract representation of a womb and a mythical family tree."

• Full story on page 6. For a further look at the exhibits, visit www.yourkenttv.co or Youtube.



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Uncertain future for children's centres as budget is reduced

■ BY ED HILL

CHANGES to Government funding could threaten the future of services offered at children's centres.

SureStart centres introduced by the previous Labour government offer such support for parents as antenatal classes, baby clinics, breastfeeding advice, parenting, speech and language, play sessions, help for children with special needs and disabilities, and links to child-minder networks.

However, the Coalition Government wants to focus money more on children with difficult backgrounds to help them get a good start.

Its grant for children's centres will no longer be ring-fenced. Instead it will be included in a larger overall fund called the Early Intervention Grant. This means a reduction in funding of some 10 per cent, leading to tighter budgets at children's centres, which may well have to reduce their services.

Last year, more than £54 million was given by central government for children of pre-school age in Kent.

The Early Intervention Grant introduced in April will mean an overall drop in funding of more than £4.5m. At present about £24m of this budget is spent on children's centres.

The Government says it has ensured that there will be enough funding for the centres to remain open, but some local authorities have already announced closures and many have told staff that their jobs could be at risk.

At the very least, it looks as if other services for youngsters will have to be cut so that SureStart centres can remain open.

Two children's charities surveyed managers of children's centres, asking how they expected the next year's funding would affect them.

The report, carried out by 4Children and the Daycare Trust, estimated that some 250 centres could close in the UK and 1,000 jobs were at risk.

It has urged local authorities who will have to distribute the money to concentrate it on young vulnerable children and families.



Anne Longfield, chief executive of 4Children, said: "Families across the country, particularly the most vulnerable, depend on SureStart children's centres to help get their children off to the best start in life.

"We know local authorities have some extremely difficult spending decisions to make, but investment now will lead to real savings in the longer term.

"Local authorities need to find new

ways to ensure SureStart children's centres earn their keep by allowing them to become genuine hubs for all children and family services in communities, reducing replication and improving impacts.

"Voluntary and community organisations stand ready to help councils find innovative solutions to these funding dilemmas."

Children's Minister Sarah Teather said: "We have ensured there is enough money in the system to maintain the network of SureStart services.

"We have secured funding for free childcare for three- and four-year-olds as well as the most disadvantaged two-year-olds.

"As councils make their spending decisions in the coming months, I hope they recognise the priority the Government has placed on early education.

"We know high-quality early-years support can have a lasting impact on children's lives, so we will expect local authorities to channel their resources at those who will benefit most from the excellent support children's centres can offer."

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To find out more information contact the Kent Children and Families Information Service (CFIS) on 08000 32 32 30.

NURSERY PROVISION

Education for Kent

Childcare companies face recession blues

■ BY JOE BILL

NURSERIES and childcare companies are facing a challenging time as the recession forces parents to cut back on childcare.

With job losses continuing across the county, it is feared that for many putting young children into day-care could be among the first parental expenses to be axed.

Jackie Puxted, managing director of the Twinkle Toes day nursery in Faversham, believes that when times are tight, parents will look to make quick cuts to their outgoings.

She said: "For a lot of people, when they are out of work, dropping childcare is the easiest way to save money."

"If they are at home, there would be no need to send them to nursery. But as a parent myself, I would try to re-evaluate my finances to make sure my children still had the opportunity to learn the vital social skills at nursery. So far Twinkle Toes has been OK and we have not really had anyone

FEARS:
Jackie Puxted believes children will miss out on vital social skills if they leave nursery



pull out. Right now, we probably have too many applying to come here, if anything, so we are doing well."

But Jackie, who managed the Abbey School day nursery before taking it over in 2009 and renaming it Twinkle Toes, believes that areas of Kent that sustain heavy job cuts will lead to a downturn for nurseries.

She said: "I am sure with Pfizer closing in Sandwich, childcare in that area will decline. It is a lot easier to keep your children at home when you

are out of work. I have also been told that some other nearby areas have seen a downturn in numbers."

The Daycare Trust, a national children's charity, has expressed concern after 900 nurseries and playgroups closed in England last year.

It reported that the cost of a nursery place had risen by almost 5 per cent in the last year, averaging between £79 and £109 for 25 hours of care a week.

• For more about the Daycare Trust, visit www.daycaretrust.org.uk.

Winds of change

PRIMARY schools around the county are becoming increasingly involved in sustainable-energy projects.

Aldington primary school, near Ashford, recently received £14,676 from the ScottishPower Green Energy Trust so it could install a wind turbine and solar photovoltaic panels.

More and more schools are applying for such grants to install energy-generating technology, educate pupils about sustainable energy and save money.

The wind turbine and photovoltaic cells are expected to generate 37,400 kWh of energy per year, making the school self-sufficient.

Surplus power will be fed back to the National Grid under a buy-back tariff, which will help to raise money for the school.

Head-teacher Sandra MacCourt said: "The key motivation for our micro-generation project is to encourage pupils to learn about the importance of renewable energy generation."

The Kent Energy Centre has also carried out a survey of schools to look at their potential for generating power.

For example, it found that the Churchill School, near Folkestone, had potential to produce electricity because of high wind speeds and sunlight levels.

Schools in the independent sector are also benefiting from green power.



Kent College preparatory school in Pembury was given £20,000 by ScottishPower to install solar thermal heating in its indoor swimming pool.

The installation also included visual-display units to monitor its energy-saving progress.

The solar thermal heating will reduce the school's gas usage by about 50 per cent.

Richard Green, assistant bursar, said: "By showing commitment to green issues, we hope to set an example to our pupils. The eco-technology creates a vital and visual renewable energy source."

Alison McKean, environmental policy manager at ScottishPower, said: "These projects are only possible through our customers, who contribute to our green tariff."



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EMPLOYABILITY

Education for Kent

'Some pupils are leaving school without vital workplace skills'

EXPLORING the way that schools and industry can work together is one of the specialities of education expert Els Howard.

Ms Howard, from Hythe, has been instrumental in bringing about projects linking business and learning and putting students into community-based initiatives.

And she feels that a mutual relationship between the world of the classroom and workplace can only be beneficial to both.

"Industry needs to understand what education can deliver, and education needs to understand what industry is looking for," she said.

A skills fair at Folkestone's Leas Cliff Hall in February saw companies set up stands to show groups of students what they do.

It was organised by Ms Howard as part of her drive to encourage cooperation between both fields.

"Schools are looking more and more to involve local organisations and businesses," she said.

"Some have even put GCSE exams back to year 10 so that year 11 is freed up to do work placements. Students either go to a company or do volunteer work.

"Qualifications [academically] are one thing, but students – some, not all – come out without skills that are vital in the workplace.

To see this clip, search 'Howard' @ yourkenttv.co.uk



Els Howard on how industry and education need to cooperate to help with student job opportunities

"These could be communication, working together, or something such as leadership.

"It is also important that where students are involved in a project, there is an end product – something to get them excited."

Ms Howard feels that a pioneering project in Ashford is one way forward.

It involves local schools and fragrance manufacturer Givaudan – a world-market-leader

whose products include a top-selling perfume range for pop star Jennifer Lopez.

Although based in the US, the business runs a plant just outside Ashford.

"The company went to schools that run A-level photography courses and said they needed new artwork for a suite of offices," said Ms Howard. "The brief was for the students to select a subject and then present a 15-minute brief on their work and why it would be suitable to company executives. Wouldn't that experience look great on a CV?"

The range of work opportunities in a company is something that students need to be made more aware of, says Ms Howard.

"Let's take EDF Energy as an example – they were at the fair," she said. "Students may think that is not for them – they have no interest in engineering or electricity.

"But EDF is a French company, they need people with language skills, they need lawyers, accountants, marketing people – many other employees with different skills."

Ms Howard also feels that such cooperation is important to keep communities working on a local level.

"Young people need to be made aware of the opportunities that exist on their doorstep," she said. "To see a constant drain of talent from any town will not do a society any good at all.

"By showing what is available locally, Kent's towns can retain talent that might have gone elsewhere."

Longer lessons? Yes please...

STUDENTS at the Strood Academy were given a chance to have a say in how their school was run – and opted to have longer lessons.

The 1,370-pupil academy opened its doors for the first time in September 2009.

At that time pupils had five one-hour lessons every day.

"It wasn't long enough for the range of activities the children wanted in their lessons," said Richard Hart, the school's head-teacher. "For instance, they couldn't finish their practical activities in science.

"As a consequence, we switched to four lessons of a longer duration and now they can finish things like that."

Involving the pupils in their education is part of strategies adopted by the academy as it strives to improve performance.

"They are unbelievably honest in what they say and you get accurate feedback from them," said Hart.

The academy, jointly sponsored by Medway Council and the University For The Creative Arts, which has a campus in Rochester, was born out of a merger between two single-sex comprehensive schools, Chapter Girls' School and Temple boys' school.

Both were on the Government's national challenge hit-list of schools that had failed to get 30 per cent of their pupils to obtain five A* to C grade passes including in maths and English.

Four years ago, Temple was at the very bottom of the league tables, with just 2 per cent of its pupils obtaining the benchmark.

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SELECTIVE POLICY

Education for Kent

Politicians do battle over the structure of schools system

EXCLUSIVE

BY NICK AMES

ASTORM has broken out over the future of education across the county after a leading Labour politician hit out against selective education and the Coalition Government's free-schools policy.

In a hard-hitting speech, shadow education secretary Andy Burnham said his party was firmly committed to comprehensive education – rather than grammars or free schools.

“For me, the values of the comprehensive system are as intrinsic to the Labour Party DNA as the values of the NHS,” he said.

Kent and Medway have almost a quarter of Britain's grammar schools – so education experts have been studying the plans.

And Folkestone and Hythe MP Damian Collins, whose constituency includes two grammar schools, said the issue was one of freedom of choice for parents and pupils.

He then accused Mr Burnham of showing a lack of trust in people to make the correct decision by calling for more state control.



VALUES: Shadow education secretary Andy Burnham says no to the free-schools idea

Mr Burnham said: “What I would do in areas where selection had been expanded is to give all parents a say in whether they want that to continue. The problem at the moment is that we don't let all people have a say in it, so, for instance, the people who aren't at the grammar school don't get a say in whether the grammar school should continue.

“We'll see what we inherit, and you'd want to move that system back to a comprehensive system, but whether you do that by legislating with a sledgehammer, or whether you create

the tools for people who want to bring it back at local level, there's a debate to be had. But certainly there would be no more free schools.”

Mr Burnham added that part of his issue with Government policy was that the provision of free and grammar schools could be at the expense of surrounding establishments.

“It makes no sense if you set up a free school if you destabilise the six schools around it.”

Kent has 33 grammar schools, which is among the highest number percentage-wise in the UK. Medway has a further six out of a national total of 164.

Free schools are all-ability, state-funded establishments which the Government says are being set up in response to parental demand.

MPs say they enable excellent teachers to create schools and improve standards for all children, regardless of their background.

Charities, universities, businesses, educational groups, teachers and groups of parents are now able to get involved and start new schools.

Responding to Labour's statement, Mr Collins said that a process of balloting over the future of schools in any one area was already in place. And he said his party was committed to allowing the largest possible choice, adding: “Andy Burnham seems to believe that people cannot be trusted and there should be a greater level of state control. That is not something I believe.”

Buckets only answer to cuts

A HYTHE school is using buckets to collect water from leaking roofs after funding for repairs was cut as part of the Coalition Government's review on spending.

Brockhill Park Performing Arts College was to be refurbished this year – but the scheme was lost to Government cuts.

Head-teacher Sonette Schwartz said the conditions meant her pupils were being treated with contempt.

Ms Schwartz said pupils were often taught in classrooms where the floor was partly cordoned off to allow space for the buckets. She said work to the roofs of three buildings which leaked would cost £75,000 to mend and that other repairs total £1.5m.

“I just don't think it's appropriate that we have classrooms where teachers have to move buckets around. I think it smacks of contempt,” she said.

“We understand that the Building Schools for the Future was scrapped and that money is tight – that doesn't stop the roof leaking. It's going to get worse unless something is done quite urgently.”

Kent County Council said schools were responsible for their own repairs if the bill came to less than £20,000.

Last month, Kent County Council, together with five other local authorities, won its High Court challenge to Education Secretary Michael Gove's decision to axe the Building Schools for the Future project.

Mr Gove was ordered to reconsider his decision, but a Government spokesman said the judge had concluded “there was no promise or expectation” that the claimants' projects would proceed as planned.



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COMPETITION

Education for Kent

The fight is on for students

THE efforts made by further-education colleges to tempt post-16 students away from school sixth forms are likely to intensify in the face of new funding arrangements set in place by the Coalition Government.

The funding received by school sixth forms will fall by 15 per cent over the next four years and the extra 3 per cent of funds they currently get compared with further-education colleges will disappear by 2015.

This means that running courses with only a few students is not going to be an option for schools and colleges looking to go forward – they will need to increase group sizes to make some courses viable.

The financial incentive that schools are given to opt out of local-authority control and become academies also means the educational environment is becoming more fragmented.

In Medway, the fact that some schools have combined to become academies further alters the picture and is likely to lead to greater competition for post-16 students.

■ BY NICK AMES

Staff at MidKent College in Gillingham are keen to promote the fact that 82 per cent of their students who finished courses in 2009 are now in employment, and the indications are that this figure will increase for 2010.

They say they are focused on ensuring that students get the skills employers need.

A spokesman said: "Our state-of-the-art facilities are designed to replicate real working environments and give our students hands-on experience, which can give them a distinct advantage.

"It's also a common misconception that further-education colleges don't provide the same levels of support for students as those found in schools. At MidKent College our personal tutoring system ensures all students have someone, who isn't part of the lecturing staff, to support them throughout their course.

"There are also specialist teams to support learners with additional needs.

"For us, it's about working with all our students to give them the confidence and skills they will need to be successful in an increasingly competitive jobs market."

Neil Lakeland at Hadlow College is similarly aware of the forthcoming challenge.

"The market is becoming more competitive partly due to the forecast demographic dip – in which there are fewer 16-year-olds than there were in the past, due to falling birth-rates.

"There is also a widening of choice within the vocational sector – something further-education colleges are traditionally strong at – and therefore students have more options, which, coupled with the funding pressures, means the competition is increasing.

"Colleges represent a great place for students to learn and – certainly in the case of Hadlow, which has a residential aspect – develop crucial life skills.

"The outstanding provision and care which we give students – as demonstrated by our two Ofsted Grade 1 achievements, as well as the LSIS Beacon status we enjoy – is something which is important to us as a differentiating factor and we believe it gives both students and parents confidence in the college.

"Added to this are the facilities we have – no other college in Kent which offers land-based subjects has comparable facilities and therefore the student experience we give should be far superior."



VARIETY: Post-16 students are able to choose between academic and vocational courses

IT is that dreaded time of year when school- and college-leavers wait to hear if they have been provisionally accepted at their chosen universities.

Beyond even thinking about their much-publicised tuition fees, each student wanting to attend university is required to fill out a UCAS

application form. Within this, pupils must state their five choices of which course they want to study and at which university.

The institution will then make the student an offer based on their application. It can be a conditional offer dependent on the student's final grades, or it can be unconditional, so the stu-

dent has been accepted no matter what. However, some leavers will receive no offers at all and are forced to go through clearing at the end of the school term to find a different course and university to attend.

UCAS Extra enables students to have one more shot at gaining entry to a course which dif-

fers to their original choices. They can also contact universities to find out if they would be accepted so as to avoid any further headaches as well as the last-minute summer scramble.

• Visit www.ucas.com/students/offers/extra for more information about UCAS Extra and going through clearing.

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Hadlow:	11th May 2011	5:00pm – 7:30pm



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SHARING FACILITIES

Education for Kent

'We're in the middle of a schooling revolution'

CO-OPERATION, along with sharing of facilities, teaching staff and classroom expertise, is the way ahead for Kent education, according to a leading county councillor.

Sarah Hohler, KCC's cabinet member for education, learning and skills, believes the UK is seeing a "revolution in education".

Cllr Hohler, who has teaching experience, "a passionate interest in education", four children and six grandchildren, believes in collaboration between schools, both at secondary and primary level.

Speaking exclusively to Archant KOS Media at a time when an increasing number of schools are choosing to opt out of local-government control and become academies, receiving their funding directly from Government, Cllr Hohler reaffirmed her commitment to the best opportunities for all.

"There are some fantastic things going on across the county when it comes to co-operation," she said.

"And, whether schools wish to become academies or stay with KCC, the benefits of this should be made available to the pupils.

"Academies say they have freedom in educa-

EXCLUSIVE

■ BY NICK AMES

tion – well, in Kent we have always prided ourselves on the freedom in education which all schools have enjoyed."

Cllr Hohler cited one example of what she considered to be best practice in schooling co-operation:

"The relationship between Folkestone School For Girls and the Marsh Academy is one that has been incredibly successful. Pupils can swap between schools for courses, and new teachers, when they sign a contract, say they are available to work in both. This is the way standards are raised for both staff and pupils."

Co-operation between primary and secondary schools is also important, says Cllr Hohler.

"It is obviously in the interests of the secondary schools to ensure children come to them able to make a smooth transition from primary education," she said.

"Then there is the question of schools in rural areas – and Kent is largely a rural county. We have no big cities, like, say, Birmingham. Low pupil numbers can be a problem in village schools, so a sharing of facilities is obviously the way forward."

Although a strong believer in the role KCC can play in education – Cllr Hohler was deputy leader of the authority under Sandy Bruce-Lockhart and has represented Malling North since 1989 – she does want to work alongside those establishments who decide to move away from its control.

She said: "Whether schools are academies or not, they need to co-operate for those they are set up to serve – the pupils.

"I am not going to say whether academies are good or bad. But those that opt to become so should look at the financial side and its sustainability. They also have to look at what would happen if there is a different government. That could see widespread changes to how they operate.

"We are in the middle of a revolution in education. Schooling is becoming more and more competitive and we need to ensure – as KCC – that the services and support we offer are as good as they can possibly be.

"We have been told that one of the keys to a school's success is good leadership, and we can help there.

"Kent schools benefit hugely from working together – and we want to ensure academies benefit from that as much as any other school.

"And of course any school that wants to stay with KCC – we welcome them."



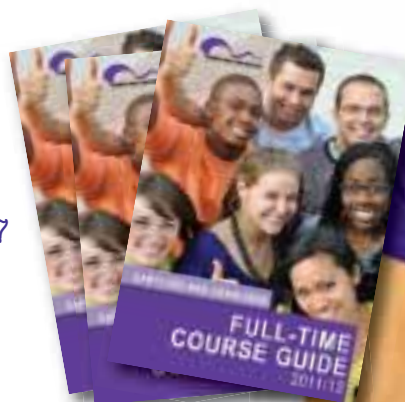
CALL FOR CO-OPERATION: Sarah Hohler is keen for all types of school to work together

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SUPPLIERS

Education for Kent

Office experts hit college target

■ BY NICK AMES

STUDENTS at Thanet College are now able to benefit from top-drawer facilities in their business centre.

Installation experts Kent Office Solutions (KOS) worked through the sub-zero temperatures and snowstorms that hit the county during the winter to meet the deadline for the new equipment.

Now students at the college can take advantage of a range of equipment and excellent surroundings in which to undertake their studies.

The Canterbury supply firm was employed by Training Solutions, Thanet College's Business Training Centre, to kit out a new plot at Manston Business Park.

The job was to furnish the college's reception, as well as break-out areas and training rooms on the ground floor and a mixture of workstations, hot desking, meeting areas and archival storage to the first floor.

Initial meetings were held in early October, when only the outer structure of the training centre was in place.

In the following weeks, plans were exchanged by email to provide a definitive layout of the premises, enabling other contractors to place equipment in the most appropriate places. Products were then selected for each of the working areas, based on cost-effectiveness and versatility.

The new facilities were praised by the direc-

PULL UP A CHAIR: A room at Training Solutions, kitted out by Kent Office Solutions; inset, Adrian Ponting, managing director of KOS



tor of business development, Karen Evans.

She said: "We selected KOS to work with as they gave us the confidence at the outset that they could meet all our requirements and expectations, including delivery within a short lead time."

"We wanted to deal with a local company and were pleasantly surprised that KOS had the capabilities to handle a significant project effortlessly."

"From taking the initial brief, right through to installation, they understood completely what we were trying to achieve."

"They came up with stunning designs and innovative solutions, especially the mobile storage and housing units, which are now known affectionately as 'puppies and kennels'."

"Despite continual reassurance from KOS, the greatest surprise came when delivery and installation were carried out on the promised day, despite the huge amount of snow that we had all suffered over the previous weeks."

"The excellent service did not finish with the installation. As with all these things, there were snags. In one of the training rooms it was discovered that some structural pillars protruded in the room, which was not shown on the original plan."

"Without fuss or additional cost to Thanet College, KOS went back to the drawing board and came up with a solution to modify the bench desks to fit the slightly smaller wall space, without compromising working area."

The plans saw training rooms equipped with

a mixture of bench desking for IT training, meeting tables and smaller tables capable of being moved for examination purposes.

The reception was designed to match the finish of all other furniture supplied, together with housing units in the archive room for storage.

Bespoke mobile pedestals with handles were designed for the field workers, together with housing units in the archive room for storage.

KOS saw the final delivery of products on the target day and finished the job, despite the need to work around other contractors putting finishing touches to their installations.

Ms Evans said: "Full marks to Adrian Ponting and his team for a truly professionally managed project."



University with city at its heart

EXCLUSIVE

■ BY NICK AMES

CANTERBURY'S reputation as a city of academia has led to an influx of students from across the world to GAU American University, which opened its doors just 16 months ago.

Founded by Turkish Cypriots, the higher-education establishment has been explaining to the wider world what the city offers in the field of learning.

Delegations have just returned from Bulgaria and China as the university seeks to expand its student base.

Visits to schools have been arranged for Turkey, Jordan and the Palestinian Territories to show young people why they should consider the Kent cathedral city.

Already it has attracted people wishing to learn business, commerce, industry and English from countries as diverse as Georgia, Nigeria and The Netherlands.

Its founder was Serhart Akpinar, who recognised the excellence of Canterbury as a seat of learning when visiting his daughter, who was studying in the city.

Chief executive of the GAU is Ufuk Ozaktanlar, who said both he and Mr Akpinar had "fallen in love" with Canterbury and the rest of Kent.

"I actually studied at Wye College, just down the road," he said. "But when the opportunity came up for a job here, I knew I had to take it. I had fallen in love with Kent – now I have also fallen in love with Canterbury."

The courses offered at GAU are tailored towards commerce and business.

"They are very much about the here and now," said Mr Ozaktanlar. "What is so good about being here is that there are so many other educational establishments we can work alongside."

"We use the library at Canterbury College



DRAWN TO CANTERBURY: From left, Emma Bliss, Emre Kaimack and Mehdi Chennawi of The GAU American University; right is university chief executive Ufuk Ozaktanlar

and arrange visits to King's School. After all, the students we have are the entrepreneurs and money-makers of tomorrow – where better for them to send their children?"

Teaching English is obviously a key part of the college's work, says lecturer Emma Bliss. "The students come to us really wanting to learn," she said. Sometimes they will move on to other universities that offer the courses that we don't."

One of the key courses offered is in the field of architecture and the restoration of old buildings.

Mr Ozaktanlar said: "There is such a wide range of old buildings and styles in Canterbury, it is the ideal place to teach such a subject."

"The students cannot help but learn from the history that surrounds them. I live in a 600-year-old building and hold classes at home in how to restore an old building. The students might go 'urgh' when I bring out the horsehair, but they soon get the idea of working with traditional and appropriate materials."

The love of Canterbury is one factor that unites the group of young people from across the world.



"Recently, some have come up to me and asked 'How can we volunteer to help the city?'," said Mr Ozaktanlar.

"They said they had helped in their home towns to do things such as clean up the streets and want to do it here."

"We are talking to the local authority about how best to do this."



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